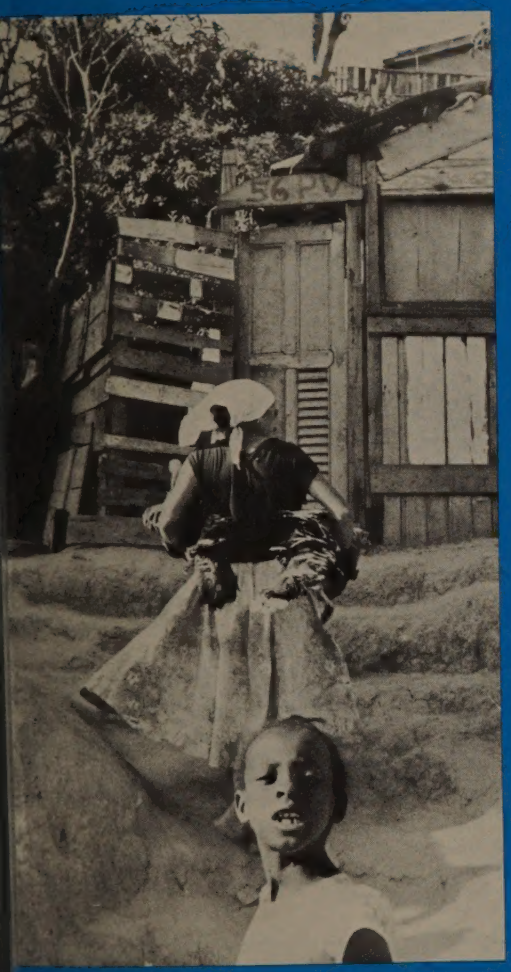
$1.00

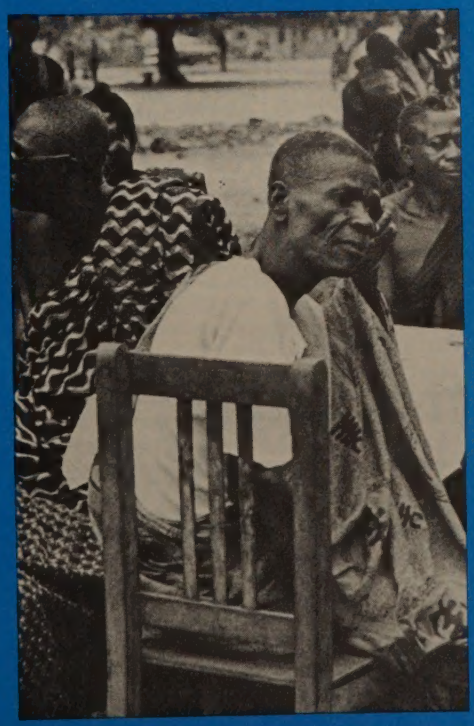
MAY 22 1981

livingCity

5 1981
VOLUME 20
MAY

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION
LIBRARY
1962





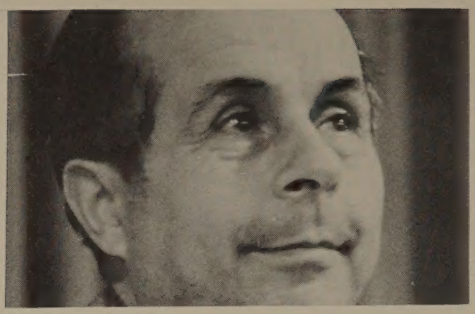
THE WORD OF LIFE
A Method
to spread the Gospel
that has reached
46 Nations. (page 16)

Piero Pasolini – story of a life (page 2)

The Relationship between Humanity and God (page 14)

5 1981 VOLUME 20 MAY

livingCity



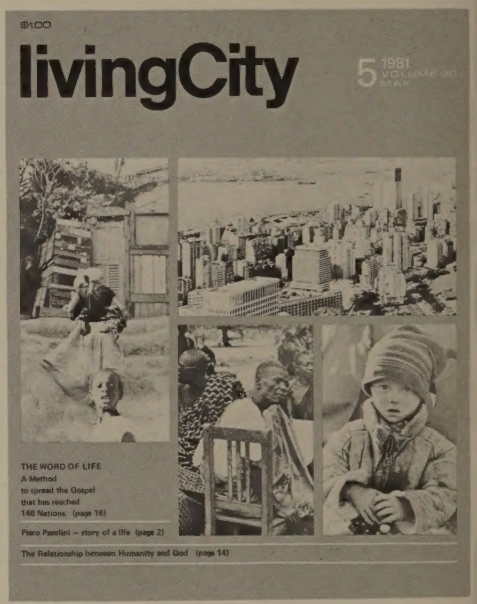
2 *PIERO PASOLINI: Our feature article this month is dedicated to the memory of one of the first focolarini who died on January 26 of this year. He has left us a stupendous, in many ways unique, testimony of life.*

7 *INTO A NEW DIMENSION: Piero tells us in his own words what it was for him to discover the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. "Meeting the Movement was a powerful experience for me — like being struck by lightning."*

Sharry Silvi	Editor
Nancy O'Donnell	Managing Editor
Lucy Comolli	Art Director
Doris Revere Peters	Contributing Editor
Marilyn Boesch James and Kathy Webber	Article Editors
Vera Giannini	Senior Copy Editor
Richard Tetreau Carolyn Johnson	Copy Editors
Longina Briones	Assistant Art Director
Mary Young	Circulation Manager
Rolf F. Rehe	Art Consultant

Living City is published 11 times a year (10 monthly and a bimonthly issue in August-September) by the Focolare Movement, a non-profit corporation, P.O. Box 496, New York, NY 10021.
Subscription prices for one year: USA and possessions: US$10.00; Canada: US$12.00; Elsewhere: US$18.00; Air Mail (all countries): US$25.00.
An envelope is enclosed in each magazine for subscriptions or renewals. Use this address for subscription orders and inquires: LIVING CITY, P.O. Box 126, Jamaica, NY 11415.

© 1981 by the Focolare Movement, Inc. All rights reserved.


$1.00
livingCity
5 1981 VOLUME 20 MAY
THE WORD OF LIFE
A Method
to spread the Gospel
that has reached
146 Nations (page 16)
Piero Pasolini – story of a life (page 2)
The Relationship between Humanity and God (page 14)

From Brazil, to Hong Kong, from Africa to Sweden, the Word of Life has reached every corner of the globe, also through the Focolare Movement.

OTHER EDITIONS OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT MAGAZINE

CHINESE: "San Sing Seung Yuet Hong" - 70 Waterloo Road 11 B/F - Kowloon - Hong Kong

DUTCH: "Nieuwe Stad" - St. Stephanusstraat 11 - Nijmegen - Holland

4 *THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANITY AND GOD: We are publishing here the first part of a talk given by Chiara Lubich on a very important aspect of Christian life: The Will of God.*

16 *THE WORD OF LIFE: A series of articles describing how the practice of taking one sentence of the Gospel each month and concentrating on living it has become a method of evangelization all over the world.*

21 *DIRECT LINE TO THE WORLD: Experiences from many countries which show that Jesus is truly light for every person who has come into the world.*

CONTENTS

Compiled by Gino Lubich and Guglielmo Boselli	Feature Article: PIERO PASOLINI	2
	Into a new dimension	7
Chiara Lubich	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANITY AND GOD	14
Compiled by Annamaria Pericoli	THE WORD OF LIFE	16
	A message for all everywhere	
	Direct line to the world	21
Chiara Lubich	WORD OF LIFE	27

OTHER DEPARTMENTS:

MARIAPOLIS 1981 24

ENCH:
"Nouvelle Cité" - 131, rue Castagnary F75 015
ris - France
"Nouvelle Cité" - C.P. 636 - St. Jerome - P. Q. -
nada - J7Z 5T9

RMAN: "Neue Stadt" - Gleissnerstrasse 87 -
00 Munchen 83 - Germany

ITALIAN: "Città Nuova" - Via degli Scipioni 265 - 00192 Rome - Italy

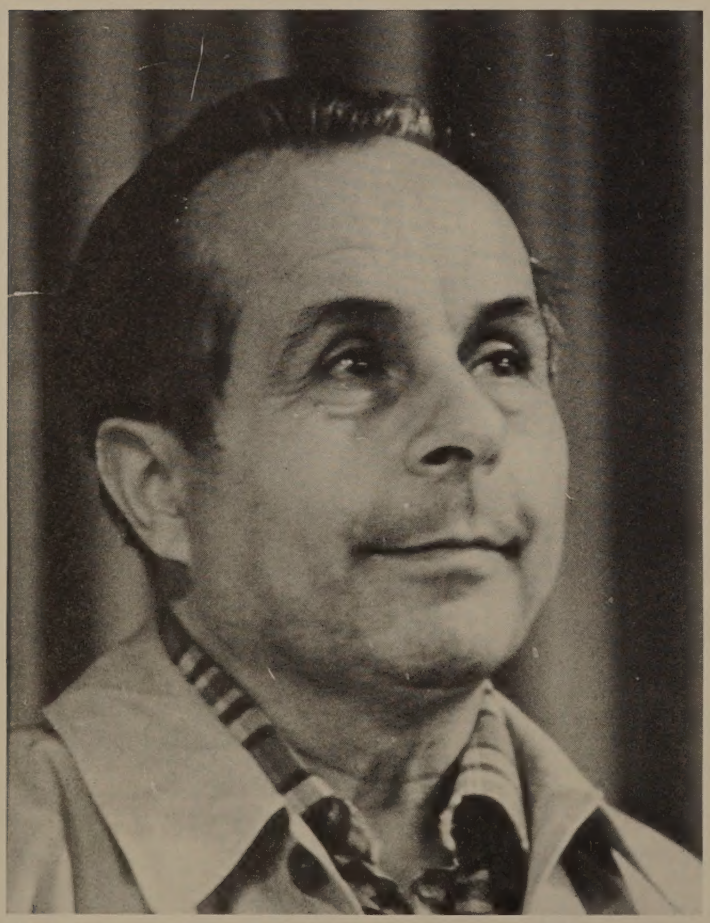
PORTUGUESE: "Cidade Nova" - Rua Pio XII 274 - Paraiso, Sao Paulo - Brazil

SPANISH:
1. "Ciudad Nueva" - Av. da Rivadavia 4939 - Buenos Aires 24 - Argentina
2. "Ciudad Nueva" - Ferrer del Rio - 1 esc A, 2º 5a Madrid - Spain

OTHER ENGLISH EDITIONS:
1. "New City" - 57 Twyford Avenue - London W3 - England
2. "New City" - P. O. Box 332 - Manila, Philippines
3. "New City" - 367 Balwyn Rd. - Balwyn North 3104 - Australia

PIERO PASOLINI

Compiled by GINO LUBICH and GUGLIELMO BOSELLI



Piero Pasolini in a recent picture.

We wish to dedicate these pages to the memory of a dear friend who died in Nairobi on January 26 of this year. He has left us a stupendous, in many ways unique, testimony of life. We shall first tell you about the period prior to the greatest of his "discoveries," and then let him tell his story in his own words, and give us an insight into his spiritual experiences and the reasons that led him to choose God as the Ideal of his life.

A few miles outside of Rimini, in Italy, there is a hill, no more than five or six hundred feet high, and on top of it there is a little village called Borghi. It was here that Piero Pasolini was born on August 11, 1917. At his christening, his godmother, a great devotee of St. Anthony of Padua was very disappointed when the name of her favorite saint had to take second place among the names imparted to her godchild. But no sooner had they left the church that she managed to get her wish anyway — for, from that moment on, and throughout his whole life, Piero was known as "Tonino." Even today his family and friends in his hometown remember him by this nickname.

He was the youngest of nine children. His father Lorenzo, a farmer and administrator of many land properties in the area occasionally acted also as a cattle broker at marketing time. His mother, with all those children to raise, couldn't be anything else but a housewife. All in all, the family was fairly well off.

In 1928, at the age of eleven, Piero entered the seminary, although it is hard to say whether he had felt any particular calling for the priesthood. In those days it was almost customary among families in the country, particularly those with many children, that the boy who was intelligent and good in school would be sent to the seminary. "If he's meant to be a priest, he'll be a priest. Otherwise he'll leave . . ." For Piero, in any case, there were no problems at that age one way or the other.

There were problems, however, at least in the mind of the Rector of the Seminary in Rimini where

Piero was to enroll. It happened that Monsignor Emilio, the Assistant Rector, was one of Piero's brothers, twenty years his senior, and it seemed improper to have two brothers staying in the same institute. Piero was therefore dispatched to another seminary, in Fano, where he attended five years of junior high school. After this, in 1933, he was sent to finish the last three years of high school at the regional seminary in Bologna. The seminarians he studied with at that time describe him as, "vivacious, always sincere, highly intelligent, a real 'pal'." "He was always whistling," the parish priest commented. And the schoolmate sitting next to him in class recalls that during study period Piero was secretly, under the desk, busying himself with the construction of all kinds of strange electrical devices and gadgets. Yet, when it came to answering in class, he was always ahead of everyone else. The fact was that it was enough for him to read any lesson once, or at the most twice, to have the whole matter at his fingertips.

During recreation he often disappeared. He had found out where the key to the physics laboratory was kept and, cleverly eluding all supervision, he sneaked in to get it. And while the other boys were playing soccer, he spent his happiest, if clandestine, hours among the scientific machinery, in the realm of his dreams. But the day came when the principal caught him by surprise. To describe the scene a silent comic strip would do much better than any words: Piero, short and rather stout, running for his life, his short legs going at top speed without hardly touching the ground, with the principal running after him in pursuit along the corridors. It was an "olympic" event, as the witnesses report the episode. The principal never caught up with Piero, but from that day on, the doors to the laboratory were definitely closed to him, at least outside regular class sessions.

During the third year of high school he realized that God was not calling him to the priesthood. He felt above all oppressed by the formal strictness of the seminary. He consulted his brother who was a monsignor and together they came to the conclusion that Piero had no vocation to the priesthood.

He graduated in 1936, and after summer vacation Piero entered the University of Bologna, majoring in physics. From his native Borghi he moved to Rimini, and went to stay with his married sister and her family. There, his brother the monsignor spoke about Piero with Bruno Maggiori, who was then president of a youth association called "St. Tarcisius." It was a branch of Catholic Action, a very lively group of about 150 young men from the cathedral parish. Bruno met Piero, and in no time the two became "friends for life." But even more than having found a true friend, Bruno soon discovered that Piero was to become a leader, an incomparable initiator in his Association.

From his very first day at college, Piero knew how to find time for everything. And this was by no means simple. His university routine required constant attendance at lectures and therefore continuous commuting between Rimini and Bologna — getting up at unearthly hours in the morning, traveling third class in those uncomfortable steam propelled trains, meals out of a paper bag brought from home. And yet, every time he came home from his physics class, he managed to be a, ". . . model of diligence and of total involvement both in the strictly religious commitments and the recreational moments of the Association," as Sergio Ceccarelli, now principal of Julius Caesar High School in Rimini, remembers him.

And the "religious commitments" were rather heavy. Owing in good part to Piero's particular contribution, the "St. Tarcisius" association was becoming an increasingly fervent communitarian group nourished by the spirit of the Gospel. The New Testament was not merely a subject for meditation, but also for the study of Latin and Greek texts. As a consequence, they were drawn to take part more fervently in the life of the sacraments; and began innumerable activities for the apostolate.

Professor Ceccarelli recalls Piero's ". . . genuine faith and piety, particularly in the frequent days of retreat and of prayer which required absolute silence, fasting, and a concentration in meditating which today is inconceivable." And he adds: "In his religious piety one could sense something that belonged to him alone, a search that seemed to absorb all his being and hid him in a certain way from us. Perhaps he was still listening for his real calling, waiting to embark on the way God really wanted him to take . . ."

But being part of the "St. Tarcisius" Association also meant imagination, sports, theatricals, and the kind of creative intelligence that is so indispensable when one has to make up for a poverty of means.

Piero, as his friends of that time remember, ". . . was the life of the group, always finding new ways for us to express our joy and happiness." "He was exemplary in everything, and a formidable organizer," Bruno Maggiori said. And Prof. Ceccarelli added: "I do not remember ever seeing him angry, or having an argument with anybody, or offending a living soul. His intelligence and his altruism helped him to overcome all differences, bringing also his friends to a more authentic way of relating to one another." And then he added that Piero had an ". . . innate sense of humility. He never threw his weight around because of his exceptional gifts, nor did he put himself in the first place, or give orders to anyone. Whenever there was something to be done, he did it himself right away with simplicity, without any reservations or expecting something in return. No one could outdo him in physical strength when there was hard work to be done." And everyone we spoke with emphasized the purity of his life. "No im-

proper action or talk, or even a less than honorable word was ever heard coming from him."

It was the time of Fascism, but those young people tried to ignore it. It meant nothing to Piero Pasolini and his friends, who embraced an ethical concept far superior to that coarse, ambiguous ideology. To the pretentious, military spirit of the Fascist youth organizations, Piero and five of his university colleagues answered, in pig Latin, with their own fraternity-type association, the "SATT" — the "Archeological Touristic Society of St. Tarcisius," born within the framework of the Cathedral Catholic Association. Apart from the cultural, touristic and archeological purposes expressed in its name, the society was also a happy pretext for joyous outings, bicycle rides, picturesque hikes that sometimes lasted as long as eight or nine days. During these outings the scientific-minded young men often made interesting finds of geological samples as well as ancient animal remains — enough to enable them to start a small museum.

It is hard to figure out how Piero, with all his university studies, and his religious, cultural, and recreational activities for the "St. Tarcisius" society, could find the time in Rimini to work on important scientific experiments, some of which he would start at the university and take home for further experimentation. His room was something that defied all description — a chaotic clutter of odds and ends that made one think of a science fiction movie. "Although it was a large room, it was practically impossible to find a place to sit down among the heaps of machinery, electric as well as gasoline engines, scientific apparatus, working tools and just stuff of every kind and description . . ." as Bruno Maggiori reported. In one corner, behind black curtains he even had a dark room set up where he could develop and print photographs.

And while he was busy with important research which was strictly connected with his university projects, he also built some strange gadgets to entertain his "SATT" companions.

During his first and second year at the university, he was particularly fascinated by the idea of gliding planes. He took off the pedals of an old bicycle and mounted them on a kind of loom of his own invention in such a way that they would set a four-blade propeller in motion. Whereupon he manufactured a pilot seat. But when it came to the building of the wide wings of the plane he ran out of money and had to give up the whole project.

He made up for it by building a bizarre floating device meant for their trips to the shore. He had gotten hold of an old, double raft, with its pontoons still in good condition. He dismantled the rest of the body and replaced it with a much wider platform which, by increasing the distance between the two pontoons, allowed space to accommodate as many as seven or eight persons aboard. But since the heavier weight would increase the effort of rowing, he decided to do away with the idea of rowing altogether. He then placed a wooden device in the center of the "boat," stuck a pole in it — to be used as a mast — and then gloriously set out to challenge the winds of the sea by hoisting a sail salvaged from a much-mended, thread-worn, old bed sheet.

He continued to be the heart of the group — always ready, always available, and forever modest, even when, during the following years, he had the extraordinary privilege to be part of the most fascinating and breathtaking scientific experience of the century. Piero Pasolini was in fact one of three students chosen by Professor Bernardini to be part of the team of physicists to work in Bologna on one of the most daring research projects ever attempted: the splitting of the atom. Their team worked parallel with that of Professor Fermi who was doing the same research in the now famous Via Panisperna in Rome.

Piero (second from the right) with the other founders of the "SATT." Typical for student organizations of that time, the initiation ceremonies for new members were quite elaborate. They were called "The baptism of the tombs," and they were conducted in pig latin with a rite that resembled something between the ridiculous and the macabre. It was meant to test the character and courage of the novices and the whole thing took place in an old abandoned church.

Piero smiles from the top of the boom of a large crane. Any technical or scientific instrument, whether it be from a home basement or a highly specialized physics lab, fascinated him.

This research had reached such an advanced stage that, when the war broke out, Professor Bernardini promptly saw to it that all pertinent data and documents disappear without a trace. For, had they fallen into the hands of the then Axis-dominated military powers, and therefore in the hands of Hitler, there was no doubt that the Nazi dictator would have used them for purposes far different from those scientific ones they had been intended for, and might have kept for himself the secret for building the atom bomb.

Piero graduated in 1940, and the discussion of his thesis was conducted with no less an authority than Professor Segre, another of the top nuclear scientists of those years. And since Segre was a close friend of Professor Fermi, the latter came often to Bologna to visit him at the university. Thus Piero Pasolini had a chance to meet Fermi as well, before the latter left for the United States with his team of Italian scientists.

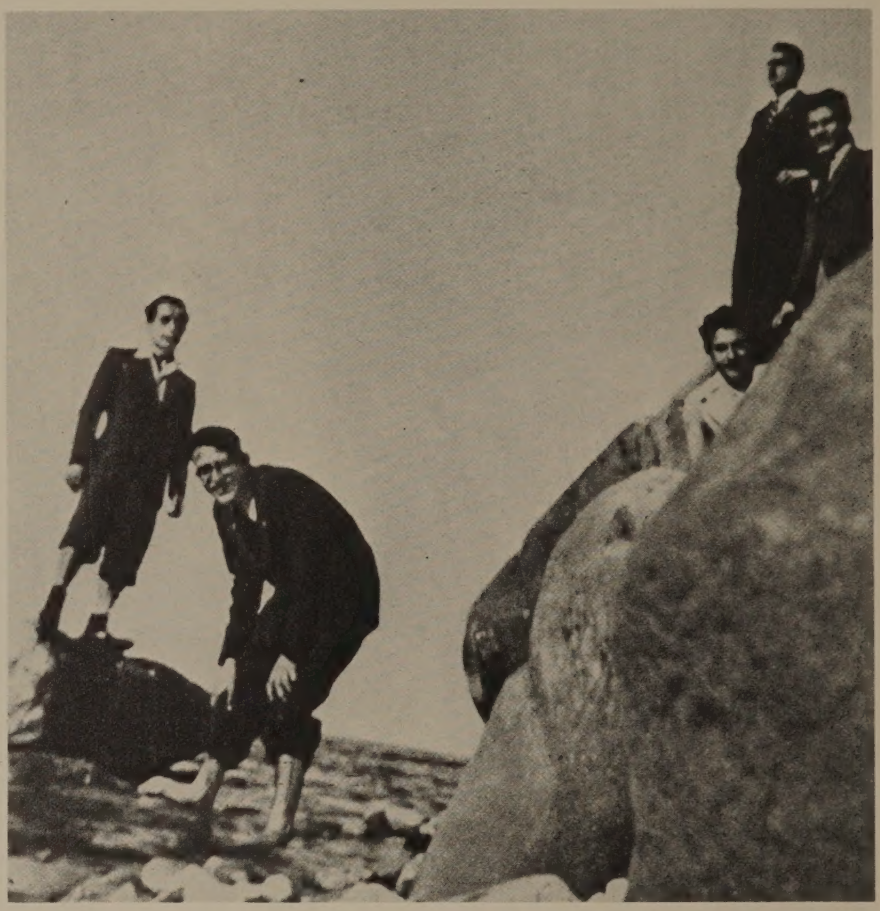
After his degree, received *summa cum laude*, Piero received the "Marconi Prize," awarded to students who most excelled in the study of physics. But in the meantime Italy had joined the war on the side with Germany, and Piero too had to enlist. He was sent to an artillery officers training school, from which he emerged as a Second Lieutenant, ready to be sent with his men to the Russian front at Stalingrad. Luck had it, however, that a medical checkup revealed he had a hernia, which saved him from the "blood bath" which claimed the lives of so many of his companions. He was assigned to a depot where he stayed until the 8th of September when suddenly the Italian Army was dissolved like snow in the sun. Everybody home!" was the password. And so Piero went, like all the others.

But in those days home, namely the villages of Borghi and Rimini were under German occupation. This meant that the population, and in particular the men, was engaged in a constant game of wits — trying to outwit the Germans and avoid being caught in their net-

work as they were herding together all able men to send them to labor camps. In the meantime the battlefront advanced closer and closer and the air raids over Rimini grew more and more intense and menacing. Piero, too, was forced to evacuate, first to a place called S. Lorenzo in Correggiano, then to Montescudo, but in neither place did he ever go into hiding.

His friends remember, how, as if by magic, he would suddenly appear on his bicycle in the most tragic moments and in the places most hit by the bombs, to bring help, to organize rescue teams, to search in the rubble for survivors, to dig shelters in the most exposed spots, to help the weakest in their efforts to survive.

Even after the battlefront had passed his area and the evacuees could return home almost in a state of euphoria for their newly found freedom, Piero continued accomplishing his miracles of ingenuity, solving situations which apparently had no solution.



Here we see Piero (first to left) with his constant companions of the "SATT," during a trip to a nearby river.

There was, for instance, his friend Bruno who worked in a bank in Bologna. But the bombs had destroyed the railway station of Rimini, so that the train for Bologna started to run only from the station of Sant'Arcangelo. This meant that in order to get from Rimini to Sant' Arcangelo, which is a stretch of about twelve miles, Bruno had to ride his bicycle. But bicycles are good only as long as the tires can hold out, and the moment came when the front tire of Bruno's bicycle just gave in and there was no way of finding a spare tire anywhere in the whole area. To whom could Bruno turn for help? Why to Piero of course! It was a Saturday. "Piero," Bruno said, "Monday morning I must get to Sant'Arcangelo to take the train. But without a tire, what am I going to do? "Don't worry, tomorrow morning I am going to Borghi and perhaps I can find one from some old bicycle." But not even in Borghi was there a bicycle to be found whose tires were still serviceable. So what did Piero do? He went to rummage in the basement of an old farmhouse and found one of those big rubber hoses which the farmers once used to pour wine from a big vat into smaller ones. From this hose he cut a piece to the right size, welded the two ends together and applied a valve. On Monday morning Bruno had his "brand new" tire.

At Borghi, too, Piero saved many a situation with his brilliant ideas. When the bombs knocked out the electric plant, he built a kind of windmill to generate power — and it worked! Also in Borghi he thought up a device to make the church bells ring electrically. Today almost all church bells work in this way, but who would have thought of it in those days?

In 1945 Piero was offered a job at the Research Laboratory of SECI in Milan, a company for electrical equipment who chose its technicians from among the most distinguished graduates of the University of Bologna. He was right in his own domain! But the management soon realized that, besides being an excellent physicist, he was also a great worker. Since there was plenty of work to be done, Piero was given quite a few additional responsibilities, among which there was some personnel work as well. There was one character who gave him a lot of trouble. He was restless, totally lacking discipline, a protester, and an instigator who poisoned the atmosphere and dragged the others behind him. Piero decided to talk to him in order to understand the reasons for his behaving as he did. He called him into his office one day and began to question the man calmly. The man opened up — he told him about his serious financial troubles, which in turn caused great problems in his fam-

ily life. Since it happened to be payday, Piero handed him his own envelope with the money in it. "Here is my pay," he told him. "I want you to have it. I don't really need it." His colleague, who was well aware of Piero's christian ideas, stiffened. "No thank you. I'd have the tendency to think that you want to win me over to your side. But I have no intention to do so." "No, no," Piero insisted. "I'm not the least interested in your ideas. Right now you need the money. Take it, use it as you wish, as you think best to settle your situation." From that day on, the rebel became one of his best co-workers and a true friend for all the years that followed.

Every Saturday Piero went back to Rimini and to Borghi to spend Sundays with his friends and family. In April 1950, he invited Bruno Maggiori and others to join him in Milan to visit the Fair and to spend some time together. They went. He had already taken care of the reservations for them at the "Hotel Cardinal Ferrari" where he himself was staying. The day after their arrival he told them at lunch: "Please, forgive me if I eat in a hurry, but at 2:30 I must go upstairs to the meeting room where a young lady will speak about a Movement I'm really interested in, and I would like to find out more about it. See you later, at the Fair."

The young lady who spoke that day was Ginetta Calliari, one of the first focolarine from Trent. When they met later that day, Bruno asked "So, what do you think about that Movement?"

"Bruno," Piero answered, "it is hard for me to say anything right now. I think it is something so beautiful that it is unbelievable. Be patient too, I must think it over in depth, then I'll talk to you about it.

He did talk about it and at great length, when he met Bruno and his other friends every time he went back to Rimini. "He's been hit by lightning," they said to one another. And they realized that their friend Piero had started a new life. ○

INTO A NEW DIMENSION

Piero met the Focolare Movement in the fall of 1949, at a time when the Movement was still in its initial stages. There were centers only in Trent, where the Movement had begun, and in Rome. The first focolarine used to travel to other cities, invited by people who wanted to know more about the new spiritual experience that they were living. It was in that same year that the Movement began to spread in Milan and Turin.

Here is Piero's account of the meeting which proved to be so decisive for his life.

"Meeting the Movement was a powerful experience for me — like being struck by lightning. I was having dinner in a cafeteria run by the Pauline Fathers in Milan together with a few young men. Ginetta Calliari, one of the first focolarine, had come from Trent at the invitation of one of these young men, to speak to us about the Movement. She was sitting directly across from me at the table, and, after having spoken of things I no longer remember, she risked asking me a question with some hesitation: 'But you . . . who is God for you?' I remained speechless, because I did not know what to say. I don't think I even answered, but she continued: 'For us God is the ideal of our lives.'

"I don't recall what else was said after that, although I know that we remained together the whole evening. But that question: 'Who is God for you?' kept coming back to me after we had left one another. It made an impression upon me because all of a sudden I viewed the world from an entirely new perspective. The world had become the projection of God. What counted in the world was God, not the rest. This fact of having God as the Ideal of my life — an ideal with a capital 'I' — changed everything. It was the first time in my life that I understood this reality and I saw that God is the absolute meaning of my life, of all that I am and all that I see. This new vision of the world shocked me.

"Later there were other meetings at the same place, but already from that first encounter, my life had undergone a radical change. Everything was turned around. I was 'converted,' in the sense that the course of my life changed direction. For months one idea dominated my thoughts: if this is God, then everything that exists, everything that happens, everything that will take place, is the will of God.

"This idea of 'the will of God' became another fundamental concept for me, and I understood profoundly that doing the will of God was the only thing that had value. Everything that was not the will of God was, practically speaking, non-existent. It was very important for me to have this idea at the basis of the new life I was beginning, because in that way I was never able to turn back.

"Later I went through many trying moments, but that first impact, the profound way in which God had touched my soul that evening, remained forever. I had experienced what it means to have him enter your soul, and detach

you from everything, taking you completely for himself.

"It was impossible for me to say 'no' to such an evident reality. But, what was I to do concretely? For at least a month this discovery absorbed my thoughts completely. I had lost interest in everything else — my work, choosing my way in life, everything. Only God mattered, and it seemed to me that the world existed simply by chance. Slowly I began to comprehend that the will of God was something very concrete, and that if I wanted to do his will I had to see what he wanted from me. It was then that I decided to choose the direct way — to dedicate myself totally and exclusively to this ideal. I said to myself: 'I will choose the absolute; I will choose God, not only practically, in my manner of living, but making of him the specific goal of my life. I want him to be the reason for which I live, to work full-time for his kingdom, imparting to the others the discovery I have made.'

"Later I understood other aspects of the spirituality that had been proposed to me, and they appeared to me to be all 'absolutes,' that is, realities having the same complete value as God himself; they were God himself. For example, I understood that the presence of Jesus among two or three people united in his name was something enormous: it was the discovery that we could have God in our midst, that we could immerse ourselves in the divine, live the divine, see that the divine functions on earth, and that all this depended on me, that I could do it together with others. All this struck me in such a powerful way that I decided to give my life to building with others this divine reality which we call 'Jesus in the midst,' this 'collective divinization.'"

In the following excerpt Piero describes his impressions of his first meeting with Chiara Lubich, the foundress of the Movement. He also mentions his first contacts with the other focolarini and focolarine, almost a year later, at Tonadico in the Dolomites, where those who had known the Movement from the beginning were gathered.

"The things I am about to share with you are like many beautiful memories now — like the memories of one's childhood in the spiritual life, when God grants you so much light and so many gifts, he makes everything so clear to you, that you become always more immersed in the ideal that he has implanted in your soul. I recall that during that period of time we spent the whole day together. We would take long walks in the mountains, and Chiara would relate many beautiful things to us. It was a magnificent period, almost like paradise.

"Afterwards we returned to our regular jobs and activities: little by little my whole life began to change. I don't remember all the details, neither the good nor the bad ones — the sufferings and difficulties that always occur along the way.

"I spent another five or six years working in Milan as a physicist in a research laboratory. I liked physics and was interested in scientific research. But at a certain point it became necessary for me to leave my job, my profession, in order to dedicate myself completely to the Movement. That moment was very important for me. On the one hand I was happy to devote myself full-time to what I had understood was essential in life. On the other hand this meant leaving my field, my way of seeing things, especially from the scientific point of view.

"At that moment I recalled an episode from the beginning of the Movement, when in 1944 Chiara had decided to 'put all her books in the attic.' That implied setting aside her philosophical studies, leaving behind her old way of understanding things in order to 'soar' into other realities. That day I too placed my 'books in the attic,' and decided it would be better for me to cut totally with technical, scientific questions, and dedicate myself completely to working for the Movement.

"I really did this for God — and I abandoned physics. However, you know how God works. He asks you to leave everything, and when you have let go of the things that were important to you, and don't even think about them anymore, then he takes you and uses you, perhaps in that very same field.

"Four or five years later something occurred that illustrates what I mean. The magazine of the Movement, *Citta' Nuova*, was in its initial stages, and those who had been the longest in the Movement were all called to see who was able to write. It was summertime and we were in the Dolomites, at Fiero di Primiero once again. Each one of us was asked to write an article on a topic we could choose ourselves. I too wrote an article, but it was a total fiasco! (In fact

Piero Pasolini (second from the left) with Father Pascal Foresi and some of the other first focolarini at Fiera di Primiero during the summer of 1956.

Piero Pasolini (second from the right) with some other focolarini during one of the first Mariapolises in the Dolomites. In the center we see Igino Giordani.

I had never received good marks in Italian, not even in high school.) I remember that almost all of us flunked that day, so the following day we tried again. But it was a repeat performance: more articles, more rejects. We really suffered because we were not there to amuse ourselves but to get something done. It was the will of God. When we were asked to write for the third time, I thought: 'It's useless for me to write on things I have no feeling for, or to write stories; I am not capable of doing things like that. I am a physicist, therefore I can write a scientific article.' What I wrote was not so much an article on science, as the story of a fantastic flight through the universe. I remember that I even liked it myself because it had come spontaneously from my own imagination. I presented it, and that was the end of me, because everyone else liked it too. Thus, from that moment I had a moral obligation to write frequent scientific articles for *Citta' Nuova*, something I have been doing now for about twenty years.

"I had to go back to my scientific way of thinking, no longer because I liked it, but because it was the will of God. This was not easy. I saw that there is a great difference between speaking on a subject because you like it and receive some satisfaction from it, and speaking on it because you want, in this way, to communicate to others the new ideal that is within you. But then I understood that, by attempting to make my readers appreciate one aspect of the truth, because it is the truth, by leading them to enjoy something just because it is the truth, I could communicate something of God. I decided to write my scientific articles with this goal in mind.

"Naturally this is not all I did; I had many other tasks in the Movement as well. But this aspect impressed me particularly because God asked me to take down those books which I had 'put in the attic.' I had to study again, to subscribe to scientific magazines, to keep myself well-informed on many topics and reestablish many contacts. Many new scientific ideas came to my mind, but all in a new perspective.

"I often ask myself why I was asked to take up my books again. Perhaps it is because, when we have given everything to God and he has entered a little into our souls, we acquire a new understanding of the world, of things, of society, and of religious life. Then something of that inner reality which is difficult to see and express, and yet exists, transpires in whatever we say. And since science has a certain impact on society today, on the mentality of the people, it may be that God wanted to use this channel to transmit something of his light: to help everyone see that the physical world which he created has an intrinsic sense, in its manner of being, which in the final analysis is God himself. Therefore, the gift of God adds in the exposition of the physical world done in this way, a presence of the divine. It is somewhat like that which Teilhard de Chardin called 'the divine milieu,' the divine atmosphere of the world.

"We need the help of God to make people understand that the reality of the world is divine. And the more we become 'Christified' by the presence of Christ in our midst, the more we will succeed in

ANTONINO ZICHICHI

President of the Italian National Institute of Nuclear Physics.

"I first became acquainted with Piero Pasolini through his articles in *Citta Nuova.* Later I got to know him personally when we met to discuss scientific questions and modern trends of thought. We were particularly concerned with the phenomenon of 'cultural deformation' that tries to present science as an enemy of faith.

"One thing about Piero struck me deeply: I had the impression that I had always known him. He had an extremely warm personality. Love of neighbor and an optimistic approach to life blended together well in his personality with all the other values that can make of a person something extraordinary: a child of God. Even though I recognize the importance of this aspect of his personality, it is not the one I want to emphasize here. There are others who knew better than I Piero's exceptional attributes as a man of God.

"The point I would like to make is the role that Piero Pasolini played in the field of scientific and Catholic cultural development. He has left behind him a great void at a time when there is such a need for committed Catholics to work in the field of science. For centuries it has been said that the conquests of science are totally incompatible with faith.

"And yet if we look at history, we see that science began in the Catholic home of Galileo Galilei, thanks to an act of faith. It began because of Galileo's deep conviction that even a rock, a flower, a drop of water, a piece of wood — everything around us on this earth — is a work of God. At that time rocks were considered to be insignificant objects, lacking any 'cultural dignity.' Therefore to study the motion of rocks was considered to be a waste of time. However, by attaching a rock to a string, Galileo discovered the laws of the pendulum. By rolling a rock down a board, he discovered the inclined plane, which led him to understand the relativity of motion.

"This was the greatest discovery of all times in scientific research, and it was not the result of intellectual arrogance. It came about as an act of deep, intellectual humility, rooted in his love for nature as it was created by God. Galileo used to say that by studying rocks he would understand the laws of the created world. No one knew then that in a minute particle of a rock there are millions and millions of protons, neutrons and electrons. Neither did anyone know that a daisy, a drop of dew, or a grain of sand were composed of three fundamental particles: the proton, neutron and electron. An extraordinary synthesis such as this of modern scientific research can be reached by beginning with Galileo's act of faith. He saw the work of the Creator in nature, and this set in motion that fantastic intellectual activity that today is known as modern science. In this activity there is no room for the so-called scientific ideology otherwise known as Marxism, which is simply a negation of Galilean science. According to this ideology, scientific progress will lead the transcendent inevitably back to the immanent world. But, according to Galileo, science deals with phenomena in the immanent world, without ever being in opposition to that which is transcendent.

"The scientific discoveries of the past fifty years are proof that Galileo was right. As soon as one phenomenon is understood, or a law discovered, ten other phenomena, thousands of new problems present themselves to the field of science. No true scientist has ever expected to be able to bring the transcendent world under the control of the phenomenology of the material world. In other words, there is no scientific basis to the claim that faith and science are the antithesis of each other. And yet we are living in a society infiltrated by cultural trends that hold the opposite to be true.

"Piero Pasolini's work in the spreading of scientific knowledge was very important in the context of this great cultural battle. There is a tremendous need for Catholics who are well prepared scientifically to defend the intrinsic values of science because it is destined to have a fundamental role in Catholic cultural development. Piero used to say that in this important aspect of our role as Catholics committed to spreading the truths of science, we are like the early Christians. The path that Piero traveled, and his work, in which he distinguished himself for his clarity of language and profound scientific competence, will be an example that future generations can follow with a renewed commitment." □

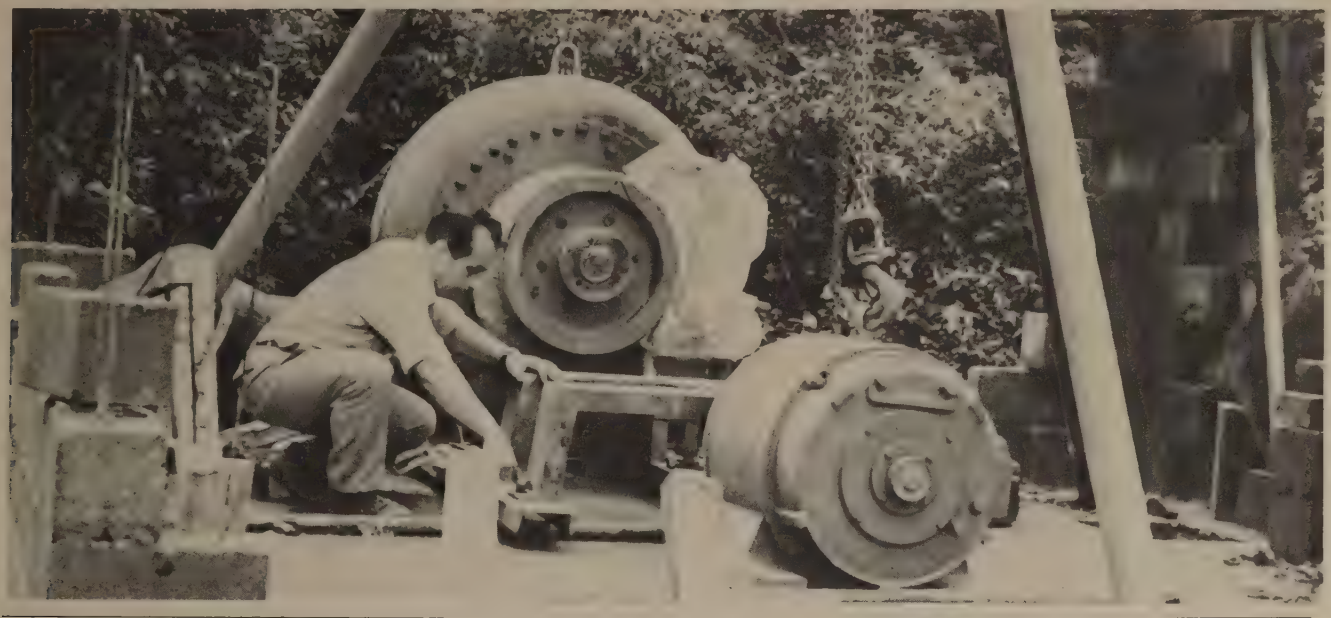
reflecting that bit of the divine which is within us. We will be able to do it in such a way that it will be like a light that shines forth, illuminating everything around it with its colors, reaching out to touch also those objects that are farther away. In this way the divine in us reflects the divine, which is, so to say, outside of us.

"This has been my experience in writing. It has been a very deep experience for me. So much so that in these years it has transformed me more and more, making me understand my vocation in a deeper way, not as a focolarino (that too, of course) but as a man, a human being. I have understood the meaning of my existence. The more I sought to live with God as my Ideal together with the others, overcoming obstacles, struggling, suffering, the more I understood the true value of my humanity, and therefore, the true value of all human beings. I saw that my vocation was to give to people a greater awareness of what it means to be a human being. I felt this very deeply, and I feel it very strongly even now." ○

Piero traveled often to Africa, and he learned to love and to appreciate the wealth of human values that people there possessed. Most of the time these trips took him to Fontem in West Cameroon. It was there that a very important experience of collaboration and friendship between the Focolare Movement and the Bangwa people had begun some years ago. The tribe was being wiped out because of an extremely high infant mortality rate. Through this collaboration, a hospital has been built and now a small city is growing there.

But Piero visited the other centers of the Movement in Africa as well. Here he tells about his first trip to that continent.

"At a certain moment in 1967 Chiara said to me, 'Piero, you should go to Africa right away to see how to provide electricity to 'Fontem.' You can imagine the difficulties involved — Fontem was located in the middle of the jungle! But there was a reason. I told Chiara that I would leave immediately and I did. This was the



Piero Pasolini installing the turbine of the electrical power plant with his own hands in Fontem, West Cameroon.

beginning of a special relationship with the people of Fontem, that has continued up to the present time.

"When I arrived the focolarini who were already there explained the whole situation to me. We went to explore in the midst of the bush, where the jungle was really dense. Even though two or three young men went ahead of us cutting the branches with 'machetes,' it seemed as if we were walking through a tunnel, The heat was tremendous and we had to continually brush away the ants that kept falling on us. I had the impression that we had walked miles, when in reality we had only gone a few hundred feet. In the end we came upon a waterfall and a river. I surveyed the area and saw that it would be possible to build an electrical power plant there. After working a week to get together all the data I needed, I stayed on to help the focolarini build the first pavilion of the hospital, to reinforce the beams with concrete and to build the wooden part. All we had was one hammer, a saw and some nails, but little by little we made it.

"The following year I returned to install the electrical power plant. It had been prepared in a factory in Italy and shipped down by boat. Once there, it took us a month to assemble it. Later, with the indispensable help of some experts from a factory in Genoa, we were able to substitute the first

DOLFI BALDESSARI

A sociologist from Trent who lived with Piero in the same Focolare Center.

"The essential characteristic of Piero Pasolini's personality was his extreme simplicity. Talking together during dinner, for example, we could start from the events of the day and end up discussing deep spiritual realities. I remember one evening during supper; we were sharing our impressions of the day when, all of a sudden, Piero made the conversation take an 'upward' direction. He began talking about the Trinity, using a circle to illustrate what he was saying. He explained the relationships between the center of the circle and all the points that made up its circumference. He identified one of these center points in a particular way as Jesus, the God-man. The Father knows and sees mankind only through this point (Jesus), and, consequently, each one of us can know the Father, and establish a vital relationship with him, only through this point, through Jesus.

"Piero communicated this idea with simplicity, but it left in me a conviction that would remain forever. He often shared this kind of contemplation with us — this was his way of living and expressing himself.

"And after having drawn us into these deep spiritual realities, he could then go on to talk about the trivialities of every day life. For Piero, a stomach ache, or the disappointments and difficulties of daily life had the same importance, and interested him as much, I would say, as the more sublime realities. Doing the will of God was of the utmost importance to him — each day his aim was to do what God wanted.

"I was always impressed by his readiness in changing his plans. There was one period of time while he was in Trent in which he had to travel frequently back and forth to Rome because the heating system of the Mariapolis Center kept breaking down, needing Piero's ingenuity. Even the well-known ventilation system of the large, often over-crowded, meeting hall of the Mariapolis Center was another result of Piero's genius!

"You seldom saw a pen sticking out of Piero's pocket. More often it was a screwdriver with which he seemed to solve every problem.

"It was remarkable to see how Piero managed to be always available for anyone who turned to him for help, and yet, with his cheerful temperament, he never showed that he was burdened by the problems that certainly were not lacking. I would say that for him problems did not exist, only people who were suffering because of their problems. This is why he could always find those few words that helped each person find hope, strength and faith.

"When he did let you share in some suffering, or a difficult moment he was going through, or certain unexpected setbacks he encountered during the day, he did it out of love, and in the end, you felt that he had helped you to remain faithful to your choice of God." □

PAUL O'HARA *Focolarino and Mathematician*

"I had always had the impression that Piero was a wonderful person, and I was really looking forward to getting to know him and to be known by him. The opportunity arose when he came to Fontem in June of 1978. We became friends immediately; I felt that I had found a second father in him. We spent a lot of time together during that visit, and the same thing happened the following year when he returned. We remained in contact even after I left Africa.

"When I found myself standing by his casket at the funeral, it suddenly came to me that the description that Teilhard de Chardin had used for himself in 1951 could also be applied to Piero: a mystic, an apologetic, a metaphysicist. Piero was all this, but most of all, he was a man of God.

"The first time I heard him use the word 'mystic' was during a conversation we had at Fontem in the middle of the African jungle, in 1978. I don't recall exactly how we got on to the subject, but, at a certain point we started talking about the concept of the infinite. We were speaking of the great German mathematician, Cantor, considered to be the founder of modern mathematics, who had worked on the concept of the infinite. All of a sudden Piero said to me that Cantor had been a mystic. This really surprised me because I knew that Cantor had gone through periods of insanity towards the end of his life. Yet here was Piero telling me that he had been a mystic, because only a mystic could have explored the infinite as he had done.

"It occurred to me that only a mystic can understand another mystic. In that moment Piero revealed an aspect of his personality. For Piero the infinite was not only a scientific or mathematical concept; the infinite was, more than anything else, something to contemplate, something that penetrated and touched his inner being. Mathematics can embrace only a part of the real infinite that is God.

"Piero was a man whose soul embraced the world, a mystic who contemplated and experienced the infinite. This was the light that shone through his life and his writings. It was easy for him to explain the universe because he had an ideal for his life that enlightened everything. He viewed everything from the One, and the universe could be explained only in this vision." □

makeshift conduit system with an authentic one. Two of the factory workers came to Fontem to install it so that it would run between the river and the power plant.

"What I want to say is that all our work in Africa began with the desire to help Jesus in the poor, Jesus in need. Everything had to develop from the relationship established with the Bangwa people, according to the logic of the Gospel. We wanted to live together the 'civilization of the hundredfold.' This is the principle which should be at the basis of our social revolution: I help you because you are poor. But my goal is to build a more just world where poverty no longer exists because all seek the kingdom of God. (see Mt. 6:33). Consequently everyone experiences the 'hundredfold' in friends, parents, in social progress, in everything, (as well as in sufferings).

"Everything began at Fontem because of an act of love, to help a people that was dying out. Now that village has become a center of life — what Jesus called 'putting the lantern on the basket.' People come from all over Africa to experience the life of Fontem, sometimes for a week, and at times for a month. They want to see how this spirit is lived — a spirit where there is no room for 'civilizing colonialism' (which is something terrible and leads to consumerism and not civilization). The program is not to teach them something; but rather to meet them as friends, remembering that we are the one at the receiving end. Who am I to teach them something? They are better than I and they have treasures to share with us.

"Chiara hopes to see a 'new civilization' come out of Africa. And we want the social revolution based on 'Jesus in our midst' to take place everywhere, replacing a society built on egoism, on the exploitation of the majority by a few people who want power.

"One day I am going to die, and you all will die too. But in the meantime we want to be pioneers, working to create the 'progress of the hundredfold' and not the 'progress of consumerism.' Consumerism is hell; the hundredfold is heaven."

This gives us an idea of the attitude Piero had when he traveled to Africa every year. He had gotten to know the people there and understood their great values. And it was precisely in Africa that his earthly life ended.

Together with all the other members of the Movement this year he had been trying to live in a deeper way one aspect of the spirituality — one of the "absolute principles," as he liked to call them. He was looking forward to sharing this reality with the focolarini and other members of the Movement in Africa and to live it with them.

A few days before he left, Chiara had reminded us, with particularly moving words of that moment of Jesus' passion when he cried out on the cross, "My God,

FRANCO PIZZORNO *a company executive from Genoa.*

"I met Piero about ten years ago when, together with some other friends, we launched 'Operation Africa'[1] in the Garrone oil refinery. More than 550 factory and office workers and executives had committed themselves to the project of obtaining a conduit system for the small electrical power plant that Piero was installing in the Cameroons. He had been working there for years together with other focolarini to foster the development of the Bangwa people. He had come to Genoa to explain to us at the Garrone oil refinery the meaning of their work in Fontem, and to arrange the technical aspects of this project. However, we had the impression that, more than anything else, he had come to meet us as a friend.

"Piero — as someone said recently — had reached his fulfillment as 'homo sapiens' and 'homo faber.' His knowledge attracted others because it made it easy for him to talk with everyone. The factory workers felt he was one of them because he knew how to work with his hands: from welding tubes, to assembling machines, to putting a turbine into motion. At the same time he could establish a dialogue with the technical experts because of his ability to plan and carry out a project with the logic of those who see things in their entirety. His sense of organization was derived from his 'cybernetic approach' that both interested and stimulated executives." □

EGIDIO MANFOI

One of the two factory workers from the Garrone oil refinery in Genoa, who went to Fontem in 1970 to assemble the conduit system of the power plant.

"When we arrived in Fontem, where we were to spend a month working together, we were welcomed by Piero and the community of the Movement. It was something entirely new for me to see people so united, working from sun up to sun down for the Bangwa.people. We weren't expecting such a welcome, nor did we think we would feel so much at home there. Piero was very simple, putting everyone at ease and we could see that he gave everything of himself, not only to the Bangwa but to us as well. He made sure we would not get too tired, or in need of something. He reminded us to boil the water before drinking it and at times he did it for us. He was always in an attitude of love.

"We worked hard, but there was also time to talk. The Bangwa people were really close to his heart — the diseases afflicting them, the death rate of the children and day by day he transmitted this human concern to us. Even though he was a well-educated and important person, he had given up many good prospects for worldly success in order to dedicate himself to others. He taught us many things that we will never forget and yet we hardly realized he was teaching us, because he taught with his life. Despite his learning and talents, deep in his heart he was one of the humblest men on earth." □

Here we see one of the last pictures taken of Piero in the Focolare Center in Nairobi, Kenya, taken the day before his death.

my God why have you forsaken me?"(Mt.27:46; and Mk.15:34). *(The love for Jesus in this moment of his passion is at the very heart of the spirituality of the Focolare Movement).*

Piero left for Africa with the desire to communicate to everyone this love for Jesus who had loved us to that extent, and who is asking us to love humanity today, wounded as it is by misery, errors, injustice, amorality, desperation: in this way to reach out to this part of humanity with this soul. Piero used one of his daring expressions to explain this reality to some members of the Movement in Africa: "In that cry of Jesus there is the peak of the created and uncreated world. We have to consecrate our lives to him if we want to truly serve humanity."

In a letter he wrote to some friends in Rome on January 8, he said: I have the impression that God is giving a special grace to help everyone rediscover 'Jesus Forsaken.' I worked for a week on the new power plant, which is in working order, and now I am going to start compiling the feature article on the Movement in Africa. In a few days I'll be leaving for Nairobi."

In Nairobi, on January 26, Piero died "in action" of a heart attack. He left this world in order to "discover" those wonderful things, those "new heavens and new earth," that he had sought to understand all his life. We remembered the sentence from Scripture that had been chosen years ago to describe his spiritual personality. It was a sentence from the Song of Songs: "Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm; for strong as death is love" (Sg. 8:6). *This was the kind of love he had spoken about in Africa. Those who were with him during his last days told us:* "When Piero spoke of his profound, total union with Jesus Forsaken he seemed like a child." *He had said to them:* "To love means being Another, being Jesus Forsaken." *He repeated this up to the end, for example to the Gen of Kenya the day before he died.* "Piero told us that if we organize ourselves in unity and love, we become something else, we become Jesus." *They described his "departure" with the same human warmth which he so loved in them:* "God saw that there was an empty spot in his garden. Looking down on the earth, he saw Piero's tired face. So he took Piero in his arms and brought him home to rest. God's garden must be beautiful, because he only takes the best." ●

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANITY AND GOD

by CHIARA LUBICH

With this issue, we are beginning to publish some talks given by Chiara Lubich on a very fundamental aspect of Christianity: the will of God, and our response, our "yes" to his will. In this first article the topic is considered by looking at a few important passages from the Old Testament.

In order to understand what the Scriptures reveal to us about God's will we must first look at the type of relationship that existed between God and the human race in the Old Testament.

God created the human race; thus each human person is a creature, and, as such, is completely dependent upon God. This is the basic relationship, the first element that must be kept in mind. All that a human being is and does, he or she is and does as a creature.

However, in creating the human race, God made human beings different from other creatures; he made them, as we know, in his own "image and likeness" (Gen. 1:26). But what does this actually mean? It means that each human being is capable of a direct, personal relationship with God, a relationship of knowledge, love, friendship and communion. It means that God created human beings as persons he can relate to, whom he can address as "you." As the theologian Westermann says: " . . . Man's very essence is seen in his being 'face to face' with God. The relationship with God is not something added to human nature, rather Man is created such that his human nature is understood within his relationship with God."[1]

This relationship is what makes a human being human. That is how we have been created.

Since the essential characteristic of human nature consists in this basic relationship with God (each of us as a human being is God's image) we must develop this relationship and live it out in our day-to-day lives if we wish to reach self-fulfillment. We have been created in this relationship with God; therefore, we can only find fulfillment within the context of this relationship.

The deeper this rapport becomes, the more it is lived and enriched, the more we ourselves feel fulfilled and happy. By adhering to what God wants from us, to his plan for us, and by conforming our will to his, we reach our fulfillment as human beings.

God's special concern for the human race did not end with its creation, but has continued down through the ages. We see this in the Old Testament where the question is posed: "What is Man?" The psalmist asks God: "What is Man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him (literally: that you visit him)?" (Ps. 8:5). Man can only be understood, therefore, as someone of whom God is mindful, whom God lovingly visits. Again the psalmist asks: "O Lord, what is Man that you regard him (literally: that you know him), or the son of man that you think of him? Man is like a breath, his days are like a passing shadow" (Ps. 144: 3-5).

We are transitory beings, but God cares for us, knows us, listens to us; we are destined to die but we belong to God.

In the Bible, the human race as well as each individual person is always considered as belonging to God and dependent on him. There is no way for anyone to escape from the presence of God, from whom each of us has come, and before whom alone our ultimate destiny will be decided.

Whereas others seek the basis for human dignity elsewhere, as in the spiritual side of human nature, the Bible knows that human dignity consists in the fact that God cares for the human race and for each human being, and that in the course of human history he visits us, meets us and redeems us. And it is precisely because of this encounter with God, that the human race has a future and can look forward to it with hope.

This then is God's side of the relationship: his "yes" to the human race. But what has been humanity's response.

God's "yes" to the human race when he created it was a definitive "yes"; not even humanity's "no" could cause it to waver.

Genesis tells of God's love for the human race, and of how he surrounded the first human beings with signs of his benevolence, and put them in a delightful garden. Even the command not to eat "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," is to be counted among these good gifts. In fact, God warns Adam, ". . . for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen. 2:17).

But Adam and Eve violate God's command. Instead of complying with his will, accepting the fact that they are creatures, they want to assert themselves and become like God, ignoring God — indeed, going against him. In them, humanity attempts to overstep its limits, claiming privileges that belong to God alone.

Created to be in relationship with God, called to respond with its "yes" to God's "yes," humanity answers instead, from the very beginning, with a refusal, with sin, with a "no."

Naturally, God's reaction to sin can be nothing other than a judgment condemning it, because sin is something very serious. However, God does not abandon the human

"The sacrifice of Issac," a carving from the 12th or 13th century, now found in the Cathedral of Volterra, Italy.

race. He punishes humanity, but he saves it and sustains it. He expels Adam and Eve from the garden, but leaves them the gift of life; he drives Cain from the fertile land, but marks his forehead with a sign of protection. He sends the flood, but saves one family to be the ancestors of a new humanity, and promises them the stability of the natural order.

Thus the grace of God is greater than judgment.

Then God chooses Abraham, and in him the human race finally says its "yes" to God. "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you. . . .'" (Gen. 12:1-2). And Abraham obeyed: "So Abram went, as the Lord had told him" (Gen. 12:4).

In choosing Abraham God is not choosing the Israelites alone, for in Abraham God sees all peoples: "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3).

Humanity's acceptance of God's call ushers in a whole new era. Abraham is now guided by God. He no longer bases his life on his own ideas, but on God's will. And God's plan for the human person and for humanity begins to unfold.

Abraham's acceptance means that he must follow God's commands. And God initiates him into an adventure that leaves him no respite and continually calls him to new and ever higher goals.

Genesis presents Abraham in all his greatness, but also in his weakness. However, despite his limitations, his "yes" allows God to carry out his plans.

This experience makes it possible for Abraham — and therefore the whole human race — to begin an ascent to ever more noble religious, moral, spiritual and social heights. In following God, Abraham will have a future he never dreamed of, because God has promised it to him and God is faithful to his word.

Thus God's entry into Abraham's life is like a new beginning for human history and it directs all of history toward one end: the definitive coming of the kingdom of God through Jesus.

The God of Israel is first and foremost a personal God, as he reveals by his name, "I AM WHO AM" (Ex. 3:14), and by his desire for a covenant with the human race throughout the Old Testament. He addressed himself personally to the Israelites and continues to address himself personally to every human being, demanding an equally personal response.

On Mount Sinai God revealed his will to Moses in the Ten Commandments. He said that he had taken the initial step by rescuing the Hebrews from their slavery in Egypt; now he was asking for the observance of the Law as their response to his saving deed.

This revelation confirmed Israel as God's chosen people and Israel celebrated it as a very great event.

In the first part of the Decalogue, we find the most important "laws" for the Israelite community — those concerning its relationship with God.

In the second part, there is a summary of the fundamental human rights: the right to life, to a family, etc., and the corresponding duties.

Therefore, the existence of the people of Israel as the community of God's people required two essential dimensions: one "vertical" — their relationship with Yahweh, their God; and the other "horizontal" — their relationship with one another and with all their fellow human beings. This "horizontal" relationship now took on new importance because it was commanded by God as part of one's relationship with him. Thus, on a very basic level, the Ten Commandments safeguard the true concept of what it means to be human.

•

1) C. Westermann, "Genesis," in "Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament," 1,p.218.

THE WORD OF LIFE

Compiled by ANNAMARIA PERICOLI

A METHOD TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL THAT HAS REACHED 146 NATIONS

"We are but of yesterday, yet we have filled every place among you,"[1] the first Christian chroniclers used to write seeing that the Gospel had reached many provinces of the Roman Empire. There were Christians to be found everywhere — from the sulphur mines, to the army, and even to the Imperial Palace.

The known "world" at that time extended perhaps as far as Arabia. Now, however, after two thousand years of Christianity, we can say with more certainty that the message of Jesus has spread throughout the entire world. But the fulfillment of this message — the renewal of individual lives and the new relationships between people, which result — is an ongoing reality. This work is never finished, and it goes ahead hand-in hand with the history of mankind itself.

It is within this context that the Word of Life, and the life it transmits, is affecting the world also through our Movement. The instrument is a sentence of the Scriptures chosen for each month and briefly commented upon by Chiara Lubich.

It is spread also through the mass media, but it often travels by simple word of mouth a little bit as it happened at the time of Jesus. Sometimes this is so because there is no other way to do it, but more often it happens because even today a life based on the Gospel is contagious; it still fascinates us, bombarded as we are by a world made up of images, a fictitious paper world.

We would like to share with you here a few examples from those places which could be considered the outposts of the world where this human divine adventure has reached.

"Rio Gallegos is a small village at the far end of Patagonia.[2] It is perhaps the southernmost point reached so far by the Word of Life. For some time there was only one family living there who was committed to living the Word of Life, but recently another family who knows the Movement moved there. . . "

The population of Rio Gallegos, an oil prospecting center, is made up largely of laborers. "Those who have the courage to settle in this place," Jorge, a member of the Movement from Argentina, wrote us, "are usually in pretty desperate situations financially. The contracts are good, but adjusting to the life is very difficult. It means a complete social up-rooting and loneliness. In addition, the area is buffeted by the icy winds of the Antarctic, thus forcing an isolated way of life upon those who live here. But the fascination of the Word of Life is great. The group of people who come to read it together — at meetings held each time in a different home — is getting larger every month. It is made up mostly of people who have been forced to leave their loved ones far away and immigrate here because of work. In this group they find support and strength, a friendship is growing based on the life of the Gospel. The Word of Life which has entered our working environment and continuously circulates among us. . . "

And how about the point farthest to the north? For the moment it may well be Malmberget in Lapland, beyond the Arctic Circle, a little coal mining village of a few thousand inhabitants. At this time of the year it has just emerged from its two-month dark winter night.

Even in the most remote regions of North America, on Indian reservations in the icy outposts of Canada, the Word of Life is lived.

It is transmitted verbally by missionaries and by the Indians themselves. To date it has not been possible to do a written translation but since the Word of Life has been circulating among the families of the reservation, the whole atmosphere has changed. Many things have been smoothed out quietly, without much ado. Many people have started to participate with enthusiasm in the life of the church and of the community. . . "

The verbal transmission of the Word of Life takes place elsewhere as well. For example, in the area

1) Tertullian, Apology, no.4
2) a region of South America, in southern Argentina and Chile, between the Andes and the Atlantic Ocean.

of Mesopotamia, there is an isolated village known as Midyat. There, in a convent of Orthodox-Syrian nuns, the most pure, most original Aramic, said to be the very language of Jesus, is spoken. At the patriarchal Vicariate of Constantinople we had been told in their oriental manner of expression: "Those sisters would receive the Word of Life as they would receive the sun, the light!"

The commentary was then sent to them in Turkish. After several months, a Syrian priest (at the request of the sisters) wrote a thank-you note explaining that the sisters really did not know a word of Turkish. But in the meantime, a Lutheran Bible scholar who was studying Aramaic had given the sisters a verbal translation. He did not understand Turkish too well, and had also asked for a copy of the Word of Life in French (which is Turkey's second language). Not that he knew French that well either, but with a little French and a little Turkish he could at least convey the meaning of it in Aramaic. Now, using the same system, he is giving the Word of Life to a group of young Orthodox Syrian seminarians, and all together they try to put it into practice.

The word of life has reached beyond the Arctic Circle to Malmberget, a small city built over the coal mines in Lapland, Sweden. The native Laps are now a minority and their cultural and ethnic identity is unfortunately disappearing.

The same "phenomenon" of spontaneous multiple translations takes place in India. The first Focolare Center opened in Bombay only a few months ago, but the Movement has been known in various areas of this country for years now. Of a total Indian population of 700 million — made up largely of Hindu, Parsee, Sikhs, Buddhists and Moslems — there are only fifteen million Christians (Catholics and Protestants). Though they are few, the Christians are scattered all over, in every region of the land. "Our condition as a minority becomes always more evident due to the enormous population growth. Our presence has to be a witness, therefore. Through our lives, people regardless of their religion, must be able to grasp the message of Christ. This is why we have been urged to spread this way of concretely experiencing the Gospel, overcoming the temptation to just "study" it and stopping with that. Although the English language is used for all higher studies, there are many areas where only the local language is known. There are eleven main languages in addition to 1,600 dialects, each with its own alphabet and its own unique manner of expression. Another factor to be considered is that not everyone knows how to read. In these cases the Word of Life must be spread by word of mouth. However, we are already preparing the first written translations for the different regions of India — in Maharani, in Tamil, in Maleala. And soon there will be one in Hindi, the official language."

But the record in smallness — which in the Gospel sense amounts to greatness — belongs to a "pueblito" south of Rio Negro, in one of the most forgotten zones of Argentina. It is called Cipoletti. "At Cipoletti," we were told, "there are a few thousand farmers. As in many places in South America, there is no resident local priest. Through someone from Rio Negro the Word of Life arrived in Cipoletti. A group of people has now formed who want to live the Word of Life and share their experiences. There is only one person however who knows how to read and every month they all gather at the same place with him to be able to hear it." ○

A MESSAGE FOR ALL EVERYWHERE

"Every soul is like a crystal with many different facets and as the light of the Word touches the different facets, it reveals different nuances of color. The situations in which people can find themselves are infinite, and infinite are the reactions which the word, the Word of God, can work in each person." These words of Chiara Lubich express an experience that becomes more varied as times goes by and the Movement expands.

We asked focolarini from many parts of the world to tell us how the Word of Life has penetrated the different environments, cultural as well as spiritual, in their countries. The result was like a collage of events showing how the Word can enter and transform the life of every person. It contains an infinite number of possibilities for solving any problem that people might face. In this article we hope to offer a few, quick glimpses of what they told us.

In the Middle East in the Countries of the Diaspora

In other issues of *Living City* we have spoken of the Movement in Lebanon, and were able to relate splendid experiences of the community there — how they strive for peace overcoming not only the physical barriers of the war and the trenches, but also the invisible barriers of ideological and religious hostility which are far stronger.

Focolare centers exist in Beirut, in Algiers, Istanbul and in Jerusalem. Very recently one has been opened in Cairo.

"The Word of Life continues to have a particular effect in these countries since no lasting solution has yet been found to ease the war situation. Whenever postal service is interrupted, for instance in Lebanon or in Syria, the Word of Life is passed on by hand and spreads from person to person. The 'network' of the Word of Life has thus become a spontaneous network of interpersonal relationships. This has served to broaden and to strengthen the unity of the community. The Mariapolis bears witness to the extent in which the Gospel has entered the lives of many people. The number of participants this year was twice that expected, in spite of the fact that many had to expose themselves to numerous risks to get there.

"Another characteristic of our zone is the 'diaspora.' In our area the majority of people are Moslems. The few Christians number from about one per a hundred to about one or two per 10,000, in places like Algeria. Our presence therefore is above all one of witness. The 'links' of the Word of Life 'network' are usually made up of at least two people so they can give the witness of mutual love. However, in large zones, this network is sustained by friends of ours who are alone in their area and have committed themselves to spreading the Word of Life with its commentary to others around them. In every situation however it is always life that shows how important that leaflet is."

There is only one priest at Samsun, a small town in the northernmost part of Turkey, on the Black Sea. He is a Capuchin monk, all alone in a huge monastery. His nearest fellow brother, who is also alone, is sixty-two miles away. There are nine Christians in Sam-

THE GOSPEL WORD BY WORD

"The *Word of Life,* like all the fundamental aspects of our ideal life, has a story behind it.

When I was a student, I was hungry for the truth; that is why I was studying philosophy. More than that, like many other young people, I was seeking truth and I thought I could find it through my studies. But here is one of the key ideas (dating from the very first days of the Movement) that I immediately shared with my companions: Why must we go looking for the truth when the truth lives embodied in Jesus, the God-man.

If we are drawn to the truth, let us leave everything, let us seek him and follow him.

And this is what we have done.

We have taken the Gospel and we have read it word by word. We have found it to be all new. We found light bursting out from every part of it. In fact, every word of Jesus was like a beam of brilliant light: totally divine!

These words struck us as spellbinding, written with the divine touch. They possessed a tremendous majesty. They were words of life to be translated into life, words which were universal in both time and space.

Jesus in fact is risen. He lives in the present.

His words, though pronounced in the past, are not simply records of the past, but words he is addressing today to all of us — to each person in every age.

I remember that the outsiders who were observing this phenomenon were surprised to find a living Christian community rather than merely a word of the Gospel being mediated upon. And they sometimes wondered what strange meditations these might be which we had on the word of God.

The fact is that the very destiny of the seed is to die in order to give life to Christ in us and to Christ among us."

(Excerpt from The Word of Life, New City Press*).* CHIARA LUBICH

sun. The situation there with respect to the Moslems, is very difficult. People go to Church as little as possible because open profession of their faith could jeopardize their career or public position. Our friend in Samsun may or may not see all of his parishioners at Christmas Mass. Once he was passing through Istanbul and he stopped to visit the Focolare Center there. The Word of Life? Sure, they could send it to him, but only one copy in Italian, for himself. Some months later, this same monk was once again passing through Istanbul. There was no one at the Focolare Center when he arrived, but he left this message: "Please send me nine copies of the Word of Life in Turkish." Nine copies meant his whole parish, which has become a united one.

"Another of these tiny communities can be found in Antioch in Syria. A group from that city went to the Mariapolis in Turkey last year. This group was, I believe, the entire Christian community of that area, (at least all the practicing Christians). Their church had been destroyed in the past, and the people have become enemies without even really knowing why. Nevertheless, a Franciscan in Antioch, Father Umile, has managed to put together a good group of young people. It is beautiful to see just how much the Word of Life has penetrated their lives and makes them want to meet together often. They can no longer do without this bond of unity."

Ugo, a young man from Smyrna, had a similar experience when he was in the military service in Ankara. In order to avoid any problems, he used a Turkish name so that they wouldn't know he was a Christian. Naturally, he also asked us not to send him the Word of Life. When after four months, he couldn't take it any more, he made up his mind to write and ask us to send it to him. Before he had a chance to write, however he happened to be in a church one day. In the back, on one of the pews, he saw the leaflet of the Word of Life. (Later he discovered that there is a priest in Ankara who is a friend of the Movement.) From then on he came back to get the Word of Life every month for the entire time he was stationed there.

The Word of Life has also reached small groups of Christians living in areas near the African desert, from Algeria to Egypt. It comes by mail to the oases, but for the nomad groups it is hand-delivered from one person to the other.

Small Christian communities of nomads are scattered throughout the desert: el Abiodh, Beni Abbes, areas where Charles de Foucald lived. As a matter of fact, the Little Sisters and Little Brothers of Foucald are the ones who distribute the Word of Life there.

The Word of Life reaches some oases in Egypt by mail. There, problems of intolerance between Christians and Moslems do not exist. This peaceful rapport dates back to ancient times.

"Friendships with Moslems, based on personal contacts, have been established to some extent everywhere — even in those places where there has historically been hostility.

"In Syria, for instance, there are two Moslem girls who have volunteered to type the stencils for the Word of Life. They do it as a favor to a Christian friend of theirs. In this way, they have become acquainted with the Word of Life, and have expressed the desire to live it themselves. Christians and Moslems in different areas of northern Africa now meet together regularly to read and gain strength from the Word of God. No attempt is made to convert anyone. There is, in fact, a common denominator between the Christian and Islamic faiths. In the Koran, one finds some of the same concepts found in the Old and New Testaments. In order to make it easier for everyone to share their experiences when we meet together, what we try to do is look for an idea within the Word of Life for the month which corresponds to passages in the Koran and in the Islamic tradition."

Within the African Tradition

The Word of Life has spread to almost all of the African nations. The official languages in these countries are European, but more and more often dialects and local languages are spoken. How do the people respond to the Word of Life in a continent which is in the process of acquiring full autonomy in all aspects of life, even with respect to evangelization?

"Our parish is quite vast, encompassing twenty villages with three tribes, and different lan-

guages," Father John of Fontem told us. "The Word of Life itself is the primary means of evangelization, precisely because it communicates the Christian faith by means of living examples. My own experience has been very interesting. We priests are often hindered by two problems. One is that we often consider only those who have been baptized to be part of the parish community and leave the others out. The other problem is that we are often afraid of imposing 'our' culture on the people here. I have noticed that by living the Gospel, we present it in the same way that Jesus himself did. The methods that each one uses may be different, but the essential content remains the same. Because of the Word of Life, cultural differences and barriers disappear. When they 'meet' the Word of Life, not only baptized Christains, but also many of those who follow the traditional beliefs, are attracted by the beauty of what Jesus proposes. We find that we cannot call these brothers and sisters of ours, 'pagans' because they have a faith, they do believe in God and we often have a lot to learn from them.

"The Catechists are trained within the parish. After spending several days together, they are the ones who bring the Word of Life into the villages. They explain it not only to those who come to church, but also to non-Christians with whom they live. This way, everyone tries to put it into practice. The Word of Life becomes a part of their lives, their cultural, their social and traditional relationships. At times, of course, they feel that they have to change certain aspects of their own customs, because the Word of Life urges all of us to strive to do better. At the same time, however, the positive aspects of the African tradition are reinforced; people feel even more than before that they should be preserved. It is a process which involves the entire community — far more than could ever happen among us in the Western World since we are by nature more individualistic. In Africa, before anything else, a person is a member of a family, and he goes ahead together with the others." ○

A TRIAL IN THE VILLAGE

I was in bed because I was very sick. Outside, I heard a hen squawking. I got up and ran to the window to see what was happening. I saw that a marten was killing the hen; by the time I got there, it was already dead. That evening I found out who the owner of the hen was and I brought it over and explained what had happened. She refused to believe me and accused me of having killed it because it was ruining my garden.

Some days later, the head of the village called me because the neighbor had accused me of killing her hen. I tried to explain what had happened, but no one wanted to believe me. So, in order to keep peace in my village, I had to buy the hen, and give the money to that woman.

But it didn't end there. A few evenings later I was putting my pigs back into the pigpen when I realized that one was missing. I was looking for it in the garden around my house when I saw that the same woman who had accused me before the tribunal was feeding something to my pig. "What are you doing?" I asked her. "Are you poisoning it?" Sure enough, the next day my pig was dead. I said to myself, "Here is my chance to get revenge. I will accuse her before the tribunal and then everyone will know what kind of a person she is!"

But the Word of Life which we were living that month was: "Love your enemy, forgive those who do you wrong". This made me decide to forget everything that she had done against me. I did it because I wanted to show that love is stronger than hate.

Carol (Cameroun)

A TOAST TO PEACE

I got into an argument with my wife. I lost my patience and began shouting at her. As soon as that moment of anger subsided, I realized what I had done. "Now I am no longer living in the Kingdom of God," I thought. "God is no longer in our home, and I am responsible for this." I knew that I had to make peace with my wife, but our tradition says that the husband never says "I was wrong," to his wife.

Then I remembered that Jesus washed the feet of his apostles and I found the courage to humble myself before her. I left the house and went to buy two beers (according to local tradition, drinking beer together is a declaration of peace.) After dinner, I brought out the two bottles and said, "A man doesn't have to ask his wife for forgiveness, but I want to live the Gospel. This morning I destroyed the unity between us. Let's drink together and make peace."

A great joy was restored to our home. When I told this experience to the others in the community, they were really astounded because they could see how powerful the Word of God is.

Pa Mathias (Cameroun)

DIRECT LINE TO THE WORLD

A New Community In The Midst Of The "Favelas"

I have been working for some years in a village that has now grown into a parish. There is a lot of drug traffic here, so robberies and violent crimes of all sorts happen frequently (with up to four or five homicides a week). The "favelas" (slum areas) are growing steadily.

When the people here heard that nuns instead of priests would be coming to take care of the pastoral and religious work in the parish, they reacted negatively. Nonetheless, due to the shortage of priests, two of us came here to work. We wanted to be at the service of everyone and be ready to help whenever needed.

It was not easy getting started. Less than a month after we arrived the sister who had come with me gave up and returned to where she had been before. The one who came to replace her only stayed nine days.

One year went by, and little by little the words of the Gospel generated new life in the community. We began holding weekly cathechism lessons for children and adults using a sentence from the Gospel as a reference point that could be applied in different situations during the week. Now there are nineteen groups with 200 children and forty young people who regularly attend the catechism lessons. Working together and participating actively in the life of the Christian community encourages the people to reach out to the sick, the lonely, the alienated. Gradually all have become involved in living the Gospel.

The community has started to assess the situation of each family living in the "favelas." Besides putting at the disposal of these families all they need in the way of food and clothing, they try to give them a new lifestyle. In this way, an attempt is also made to help them advance humanly and socially.

One thing we did was to invite all the boys of the "favelas" to come to the parish for a gathering prepared by the Gen. We wanted these children to realize that they too are a vital part of this community. We were expecting about eighty boys to come so we had prepared lunch for that many. Instead, 200 showed up. We didn't know how we were going to feed them all. The words of the Gospel helped us to believe in the love of God and go ahead. We don't know how exactly, but it all worked out. The food we had prepared was enough for everyone. The parents of the children have also become involved and have rediscovered the value of the Church — now they feel that it is their home.

Many people come to us every day to ask for advice or simply tell us about their problems. For instance, one man came to see me once and said, "I'm forty years old and I have one daughter who is twelve. From the time I was a teenager, I led a pretty immoral life. At a certain point, I had the impression that God had turned his back on me. But ever since my my wife became a part of your community, it is as if God has 'turned around to us' again (this is an expression used locally). Now we are planning to get married in the Church." He and his wife had previously been owners of a few questionable establishments and were involved in selling drugs. They left everything in order to begin a new life that is more human.

Sister Nelsi Xavier
(Rio di Janeiro)

The Taxi Driver Saved Me

One day on my way home from school I noticed something lying in a ditch next to the road — I walked over and discovered it was a man. He had been beaten up and was unconscious. My first reaction was to get out of there fast because I figured that if I stayed they'd blame me. After I had gone a short distance, I remembered the Word of Life: "Whatever you have done to the least of these my brothers, that you do to me." I went back, picked up the man and called a cab to take him to a hospital. I didn't have any money with me to pay, but I called the cab just the same because I thought, "I'm doing it for Jesus."

On the way, the cab driver asked me, "Is he your brother?" "No," I replied. "Then why are you going with him to the hospital?" I answered, "I'm doing it for Jesus." He remained speechless. When we

THE WHOLE TRUTH IN EVERY WORD

There is one aspect which is often emphasized: the necessity of living the "word" of life," and the fact that a complete sentence of the Holy Scriptures that expresses a revealed truth told us by God, leads us to the whole of the revealed truth. This is true because any complete sentence puts us into contact with God who is the source of the whole revelation. Therefore, living the word of life puts us into contact with God and with all truth.

This idea is also expressed in Holy Scripture where it is stated, "All Scripture is inspired by God" (2 Tim. 3:16). An authoritative interpretation of the Greek word *pasa* points out that this word means not only "all" (the Scripture as a whole is inspired by God), but also "every." Every excerpt of Scripture is inspired by God and has its use to instruct and persuade.

(Excerpt taken from* Reaching for More *by Pascal Foresi, New York: New City Press, 1972, pp. 50—51).

PASCAL FORESI

got to the hospital, he helped me carry the man in and left without asking for the fare.

In the emergency room, the doctor took off the man's shirt in order to treat him. When he handed me the shirt I noticed something falling out of the pocket. I immedately saw that it was money. I was tempted to take it and go; but I told myself, "I can't rob Jesus." I waited until the wounded man woke up. The first thing he did was to look for his shirt. Whoever had beaten him up had probably wanted the money. I gave him the money and went home.

One week later I was struck suddenly by an attack of pernicious malaria. Just as I was leaving my home, my vision began to blur and I couldn't see where I was going. I had a tremendous headache. I tried to hail a cab to take me to the hospital, but no one stopped. Completely exhausted, I sat down on the curb. At that moment a cab pulled up and I asked the driver if he could take me to the hospital. He answered, "Don't you recognize me? I'm the man you pulled out of the ditch and took to the hospital. I bought this cab with the money I had that night. And now I can use it to take you to the hospital.

As soon as we got there, the doctor told me, "If you had waited any longer, it would have been too late." The Gospel really gives the hundredfold.

Jean — Duala (Cameroon)

With the victims of the earthquake: "I received more than I gave."

When we got to Sant'Angelo de' Lombardi, Father Aurelio accompanied us to Conza where we were to spend a few days helping the victims of the earthquake. Almost all of them were being housed in the cabins of laborers working for a firm that was building a dam. Although their situation was still pretty uncertain, at least these inhabitants of Conza were together once more. The people in the country-side, however, were completely isolated.

We reached out to the families especially, in particular to the family of Gerard and Alphonsina, both about 70 years old, who had lost everything: children, daughter-in-law, house, and farm animals . . . They welcomed us with friendship, but we noticed a certain reserve as well. Only later did they explain why: a few days earlier, a man posing as an inspector who had come to evaluate the damage done to their house, had robbed them of the box where they were keeping the golden jewelry that had belonged to their deceased relatives.

I lived every moment of those days very intensely. Inside I felt a deep peace and joy because I tried to let myself be guided moment by moment by the needs of those around me.

Being near these simple people changed me very much. The more our friendship grew, the more they wanted to tell us about their lives, even the most frightful details of that tragic event. While listening to them, we shared their suffering in a deep way.

One of the strongest experiences of that period of time was on December 23, when a Mass was offered in memory of all the earthquake victims. There we relived those tragic moments with them in a particular way.

At times we heard it said that the people in these places were not cooperating enough. Perhaps it was easy to overlook the fact that in addition to the need of rebuilding their houses, there was an even more urgent need of rebuilding their souls. For this reason, we felt it was important to make them realize that in spite of everything life goes on, beginning even with the little things like going to the Post Office to get the mail, gathering oats from the barn, and cutting the firewood.

This experience greatly enriched me. I know that words cannot express what I experienced and received from these friends of ours who are suffering.

Nino (Italy)

IT IS THE "HOW" THAT MATTERS

There are days when, humanly speaking, things go better, and days when things go worse. You experience then once again that what matters in the one life you have been given is not so much if things go well or not, but rather *how* you live your life. That *how* contains love, charity which is the only thing that gives value to everything. In fact only those who observe the word of God truly love him. (cf. John 14:23)

The only thing we will bring with us to heaven is *how* we have lived this life.

Therefore, let us begin each day happy: whether there are storms or the sun is shining. Let us remember that all that will remain of our day is how much we have "assimilated" of the word of God. If we live in this way, Christ will live in us and he will give a meaning to the acts we perform — both those we work on directly and those we participate in through prayer, or offering our suffering. At the end of our lives, these acts will remain. (cf. Ap. 14:13)

We will rejoice in seeing how the word of God, that is the Truth, makes us free . . . (cf. Jn. 8:32)

CHIARA LUBICH

I had married a thief

It was a terrible shock for me to discover shortly after our marriage that my husband was the head of a ring of thieves. They planned a robbery that failed, however, and as a result he was sentenced to thirteen years in jail. I couldn't believe that this was happening to me and I decided to get a separation and to never to see him again. Above all, I was concerned about our child, and I hoped that we could begin a new life together.

For about six years I had no further contact with my husband. Then I was notified by the prison that he had been admitted to a hospital and was very seriously ill. This news reminded me of the past, so to speak, and of that old wound. But now things were somewhat different: my husband was a man whose life had been ruined, someone in need of help. Perhaps he missed me, and needed a family.

As far as my own life was concerned, I had been in touch with a group of the Focolare Movement for about two years, and because of that experience, I was beginning to see things — my marriage, for example — in a new light. I realized that there was a sacrament binding me to my husband, and that now God

was asking me to go about it after such a long time. "Would he even want to see me?" I asked myself.

I then spoke with a friend of mine who is a priest, and together we decided that he should be the first one to go and see my husband, bringing him word of me, so that he would no longer feel that I was rejecting him.

Then my husband's health improved and he had to go back to prison. By that time I was visiting him myself, and bringing him food, clothing, medicine, and whatever else he needed.

He could not figure out why I and my daughter (who was only an infant when he left) had come back to him. One day he asked me about the reason behind my actions and we had a long talk. For the first time, we spoke to one another in depth. I was able to tell him about the discovery I had made of the Gospel, and also about the simple yet powerful way I had learned to live it — through the Word of Life. He listened closely to what I said and was moved by it. The sufferings we had gone through had matured both of us and made us better able to listen to one another and understand one another.

My husband also asked to see the leaflet which contained the commentary on the Word of Life for that month. And ever since then, he has wanted to receive it every month.

Like my own, his discovery of the love of God has been a progressive, yet decisive one. Now he seems like a different person. He shared his new hope with other friends of his who are inmates in that prison, and together they, too, are trying to live the Word of Life.

Marta (Buenos Aires)

A group of Vietnamese refugees read the Word of Life together. The members of the Movement in Hong Kong have been doing everything possible to help these refugees.

Earning less, but remaining a Christian

I didn't belong to any particular religion, but one Sunday when I was off from my job, I went along with my wife, who is Catholic, to a gathering of the Focolare Movement. There I learned about the life of the Gospel. I wanted to know more about the Word of Life, so I started reading it every month. After a certain point I felt the desire to receive the sacrament of Baptism. I tried to see when I could go for instruction. But my job in a restaurant took up most of my time. Usually, I worked until the early hours of the morning. Even though the pay was excellent, little by little I became dissatisfied. I didn't have enough time with my wife and children — much less time to spend getting to know more about Christianity.

It was really hard, but finally I found another job. It paid less but it allowed me the time to go to catechism lessons and to help out around the house and with the children. This also made things a little easier for my wife who worked too.

However, it caused my relationship with my mother to become tense. She didn't agree with my decision and she told me so repeatedly: "A man should not do a woman's job; his task is to bring home the money." She expressed the opinion of our tradition and of a certain old-fashioned way of thinking.

When a friend of mine from work opened his own restaurant, he offered me a high salary if I would work with him. I was really tempted to say yes. But the Word of Life suggested another line of action: "Seek first the kingdom of God and all the rest will be given to you." Even though it might have eased some of the difficulties at home, I decided to remain with my current job because the new one would just put me back in the same situation as before, with the same problems.

Not long ago I was baptized. Also, my contact with the Movement has become deeper. The Word of Life has changed many things in our family. Little by little even my mother has been attracted to this new life. Recently she was seriously ill and some friends of the Movement took care of her. Now our entire family really tries to live Christianity.

Tam — Hong Kong

THE WORD AND THE EUCHARIST

"Tell me, my brothers, which is of greater worth, the word of God or the body of Christ? If you want your answer to be truthful, you must agree with me that the word is not less than the Body of Christ. Now when the Body of Christ is given us, we take great care that no particle of it falls to the ground. In the same way we must be careful that the word of God, when it is given to us, should not vanish from our hearts because we think or speak of other things. The one who hears the the word of God negligently will be no less guilty than the one who, out of distraction, lets the Body of Christ fall to the ground."

(Excerpt taken from Sermon 300). **SAINT AUGUSTINE**

MARIAPOLIS 1981

FOUR MARIAPOLISES WILL BE HELD IN NORTH AMERICA THIS SUMMER! YOU ARE INVITED!

SOUTHWEST:

New Mexico Highlands University
Las Vegas, New Mexico
June 28, after supper — **July 4,** after breakfast

Las Vegas is in the northern part of New Mexico, the "land of enchantment." It is located about 60 miles east of Santa Fe, at an altitude of 6,500 feet. It is an historic community with a population of approximately 15,000 people. The main route of the famous Santa Fe Trail passes through the New Mexico Highlands University campus where — here and in the surrounding area — the "Wild West" was actually lived. Las Vegas is located on Interstate 25. Amtrack trains and Greyhound buses stop daily in Las Vegas, New Mexico. The nearest large airport is in Albuquerque, 120 miles away.

NORTHWEST:

Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington
July 12, after supper — **July 18,** after breakfast

Western Washington University occupies a hillside site in Bellingham, overlooking the city, the bay, and many of the San Juan islands. Its architectural blend of the traditional and the modern reflect the majestic beauty of the Pacific Northwest. Modern freeways bring Seattle and Vancouver within easy driving distance. (Bellingham is situated 22 miles south of the Canadian border and 90 miles north of Seattle.) The nearest large airports are in Vancouver, B.C., Canada and Seattle-Tacoma, Washington. Don't forget you'll have to cross the border if you land in Vancouver. Bellingham is readily accessible by Greyhound bus and Amtrack train.

MIDWEST:

University of Wisconsin
Whitewater, Wisconsin
July 19, after supper — **July 25,** after breakfast

The University of Wisconsin at Whitewater is located on a 385 acre campus in southeastern Wisconsin near the scenic beauty of Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest. It is a one hour drive from Madison and Milwaukee and a two hour drive from downtown Chicago.

EAST COAST:

Alfred University
Alfred, New York
August 2, after supper — **August 8,** after breakfast

Located in New York's rustic Southern tier, Alfred University's 230-acre hillside campus adjoins the village of Alfred and is surrounded by some of the State's most scenic and intriguing attractions. The area boasts bright, mild summer days and cool, sleepable nights. The Village of Alfred, seventy miles south of Rochester, is easily reached by East-West Route 17 (Southern Tier Expressway) and from the North and South by Routes 15, 19, 21 and 36.

About the Mariapolis

The Mariapolises are the summer meetings of the Focolare, held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the participants will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according to the Gospel.

For many years the summer convention of the Focolare Movement has been called "Mariapolis" (City of Mary) because Mary is the person who generated Christ. The main goal, in fact, of those who participate in a Mariapolis is to generate the presence of Christ in the community through the practice of mutual and constant charity. "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Mt. 18:20). Many Mariapolises take place every year in countries all over the world. In 1980 more than 80,000 people participated in these Mariapolises.

Las Vegas, New Mexico
June 28, after supper to
July 4, after breakfast

NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington
July 12, after supper to
July 18, after breakfast

MIDWEST MARIAPOLIS
University of Wisconsin
Whitewater, Wisconsin
July 19, after supper to
July 25, after breakfast

EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS
Alfred University
Alfred, New York
August 2, after supper to
August 8, after breakfast

Terms of payment

Registration: The registration fee is not included in the accommodations fee. See prices on the back. Please note deadlines for registration and accommodations fees under specification for each Mariapolis. Late registration fee: US$2.50. No registration fee for young people up to 18 years of age.

Cancellations in writing received prior to dates indicated for each Mariapolis will be given full refund. After this date money is transferable to another person but not refundable.

Daily rates available for those not attending the whole week.

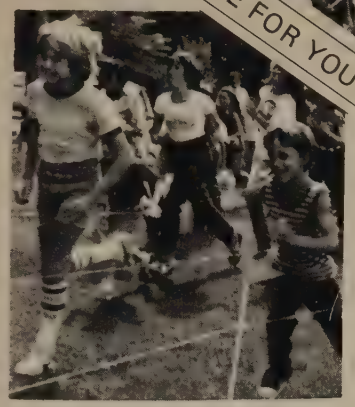
Young people up to 18 years of age should register using the same form even though fee is not required.

1

To register for the 1981 Mariapolis please fill in the registration form on the reverse side.
For your convenience this page can be transformed into an envelope as indicated to the right.

COME !

THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU AT THE 1981 MARIAPOLIS



3 3

YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS

_____

_____

PLACE STAMP HERE

FOCOLARE MOVEMENT—MARIAPOLIS

_____

_____

ATTENTION!
Where to send your registration:

SOUTHWEST:
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 71701
  Los Angeles, CA 90071 OR
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 32302
  San Antonio, TX 78216

NORTHWEST:
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 71701
  Los Angeles, CA 90071 OR
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 302 — Stn. T
  Toronto, Ontario M6B 4A3
  Canada

MIDWEST:
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 53426
  Chicago, IL 60653

EAST COAST:
- **Focolare Movement — Mariapolis**
  P.O. Box 496
  New York, NY 10021

Special services provided:
Children's Program - Nursery facilities

Simultaneous translations:

SOUTHWEST:	Spanish
MIDWEST:	Spanish and Italian
EAST COAST:	French, Spanish and Italian

(When you check for translation please indicate how many people will be needing it.)

Priests should bring their own alb and stole for concelebration.

We cannot provide accommodations prior to the beginning or after the ending of the Mariapolises.

If small children who are not required to pay for accommodations (see each Mariapolis for age limit) use a bed, they will have to pay for it.

Young people under 18 years of age unaccompanied by a parent must have a permission slip signed by a parent.

Trailers permitted only at the Northwest Mariapolis. Participants planning to come with trailers should write for rates and conditions. Trailers must be self-contained.

2 **Pets** are not allowed in dormitories.

1. Tear off page.
2. Cut along dotted lines.
3. Fold back lines nos. 1 and 2.
4. Fold back line no. 3.
5. Fold flap over.

Before filling out this **REGISTRATION FORM**
please read carefully detailed information
on both sides of the form

SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

Las Vegas, New Mexico
June 28, after supper to
July 4, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE:
Single persons ..... US$ 50
Married couples ..... US$ 70
No registration fee for young people up to 18 years of age.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
Adults ..... US$130
Children (3-12 years) ..... US$ 60
No accommodation fee for children under 3 unless they use a bed, in which case the fee is US$30. Please specify on the registration form if so desired.

Registration fee due by **May 29**
Payment in full due by **June 15**

Full refund for cancellations received in writing by **June 19**

Box lunch provided last day without additional charge.

No towels provided.

SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATIONS:
Spanish ☐ # (Please check if needed and specify number)

MIDWEST MARIAPOLIS

Whitewater, Wisconsin
July 19, after supper to
July 25, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE:
Single persons ..... US$ 50
Married couples ..... US$ 70
No registration fee for young people up to 18 years of age.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
Adults ..... US$130
Children (4-10 years) ..... US$ 70
No accommodation fee for children under 4 unless they use a bed, in which case the fee is US$35. For children between 4 and 10 with sleeping bags in their parents' room, fee is US$35. Please specify on the registration form is so desired.

Registration fee due by **June 19**
Payment in full due by **June 30**

Full refund for cancellations received in writing by **July 3**

Box lunch provided last day without additional charge.

SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATIONS: ☐ Spanish
(Please check if needed and specify number) # ☐ Italian

NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

Bellingham, Washington
July 12, after supper to
July 18, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE:
Single persons ..... US$ 50
Married couples ..... US$ 70
No registration fee for young people up to 18 years of age.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
Adults ..... US$140
Youth (11-18 years) ..... US$ 95
Children (2-10 years) ..... US$ 70
No accommodation fee for children under 2 unless they use a bed, in which case the fee is US$25. For children from 2 to 10 years, who sleep in their parents' room with sleeping bags, fee is US$45. Please specify on the registration form if so desired.

MEALS ONLY:
Adults ..... US$ 75
Children (2-10 years) ..... US$ 45

Registration fee due by **June 1**
Payment in full due by **June 15**
Full refund for cancellations received in writing by **June 30**

EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS

Alfred, New York
August 2, after supper to
August 8, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE:
Single persons ..... US$ 50
Married couples ..... US$ 70
No registration fee for young people up to 18 years of age.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
Adults ..... US$130
Children (3-12 years) ..... US$ 70
No accommodation fee for children under 3 unless they use a bed, in which case the fee is US$35. Please specify on the registration form if so desired.

Registration fee due by **July 6**
Payment in full due by **July 17**

Full refund for cancellation received in writing by **July 25**

Box lunch provided last day without additional charge.

I/We will attend the —

- ☐ SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
- ☐ NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
- ☐ MIDWEST MARIAPOLIS
- ☐ EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS

NAME(S) OF PARTICIPANT(S)
[Please indicate age and sex of participant(s) under 18 years of age.]

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

ADDRESS: _____
Street **City**

_____
State **Zip** **Tel.**

REGISTRATION(S):

single persons $ _____ **couple $** _____ **Total $** _____

ACCOMMODATIONS:

children $ _____ **adults and youth $** _____ **Total $** _____

Amount enclosed $ _____

(Please make check payable to Focolare Movement in US$)

If you plan to participate in only a part of the Mariapolis please chec below—

DAY OF ARRIVAL: _____
breakfast ☐ **lunch** ☐ **dinner**

DAY OF DEPARTURE: _____
breakfast ☐ **lunch** ☐ **dinner**

I will come by car and can offer _____ **number of seats.**

WORD OF LIFE

The word makes us live.

The word makes us free.

The word guarantees happiness.

The word converts.

The word purifies us.

The word draws us to our specific vocations.

The word brings forth the hatred of the world and the sanctity of the disciple.

The word makes us see the truth.

The word brings comfort.

The word gives us joy.

The word produces works.

The word gives wisdom.

The word preserves us from human concerns.

The word obtains everything.

The word brings about union with God.

The word gives us hope of eternal life.

The word makes us one.

The word changes one's mentality.

The word makes each soul a heaven.

**"The sheep hear his voice,
as he calls his own
by name
and leads them out."
(John 10:3)**

"The sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own by name and leads them out" (John 10:3).

If we want to understand these words of Jesus better, we should see them in context. He said them after he had cured the man who had been blind from birth.

After having first assured his disciples that this man's serious handicap was not the consequence of someone's sin, but was meant rather to be an opportunity to let God's works show forth in him, Jesus had made some mud, smeared it over the blind man's eyes, and his eyes were opened.

Those present after discussing the incident had taken the man to some Pharisees because all this had happened on the Sabbath. These Pharisees had interrogated the man repeatedly, and also called in his parents to be questioned. They finally came to the conclusion that Jesus was a "sinner" because by making mud he had done work that was forbidden on the Sabbath. The man born blind then stated all the reasons why he thought Jesus was a prophet, in order to show that Jesus came from God. At this point they had thrown him out of the synagogue. When Jesus met him again a short while later, he confirmed the man's faith, and the man became his disciple. Following this, Jesus gave his magnificent talk on the Good Shepherd, from which our word of life is taken:

"The sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own by name and leads them out."

". . . they hear his voice."

You may be asking yourself how we human beings who are Jesus' sheep, can recognize his voice in order to listen to it.

We can find the answer in something else Jesus said. "All that the Father gives me [that is, all the persons he had entrusted to me] shall come to me" (John 6:37).

". . . shall come to me. . ." Therefore people are drawn to Jesus; they go to him "instinctively." This is the characteristic of the Good Shepherd. An understanding, a bond, an intimate relationship exists between him and humanity.

To listen to Jesus' voice, in fact, does not mean simply listening to his doctrine and making it our own. We have to establish a personal relationship with him who calls each of us by name.

He makes his voice heard deep within us and his truth — which is *the* truth — is at work in everyone's heart. Yet each person is always free to accept or reject his call.

Using the example of the Good Shepherd, Jesus affirms that the thief or brigand who jumps in over the fence is the antithesis of the legitimate shepherd who enters through the gate.

Down through the centuries there have been false messiahs who have tried to lure people to follow them with their various ideologies, and there are even some today. But those who belong to Jesus and know his voice do not let themselves be deceived by the promises of these "messiahs." They do not trust other voices.

"The sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own by name and leads them out."

How can you live this new word of life?

Try listening to the voice of Jesus who speaks in the depth of your heart and invites you to

leave behind your selfishness and lack of love, your pride and desire to be better than others, and any thought of violence — in short, everything that enslaves you.

If you entrust your life to Jesus and let him be your guide, you will never succumb to the temptation of an easy, comfortable Christianity, or a mediocre life without meaning.

In following him who speaks within your heart, who calls you personally by name, you will not follow beaten paths. You will begin instead a divine adventure that you never dreamed possible; everything will be new and beautiful, even though it will not be easy for your human nature. You will experience how varied God's divine imagination is, and you will discover that, with such a Shepherd, you will have a full life that will radiate goodness to all those around you, bearing much fruit.

And, you will finally understand what a powerful and wonderful force for change the Gospel is when it is lived.

CHIARA LUBICH

FOCOLARE ADDRESSES IN NORTH AMERICA

NEW YORK:
P.O. Box 496
New York, NY 10021

CHICAGO:
P.O. Box 53426
Chicago, IL 60653

BOSTON:
P.O. Box 239
Roslindale, MA 02131

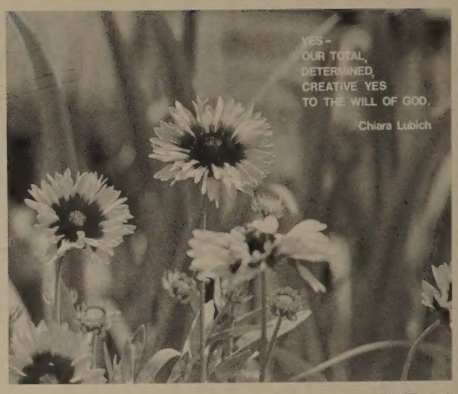
SAN ANTONIO:
P.O. Box 32302
San Antonio, TX 78216

LOS ANGELES:
P.O. Box 71701
Los Angeles, Ca 90071

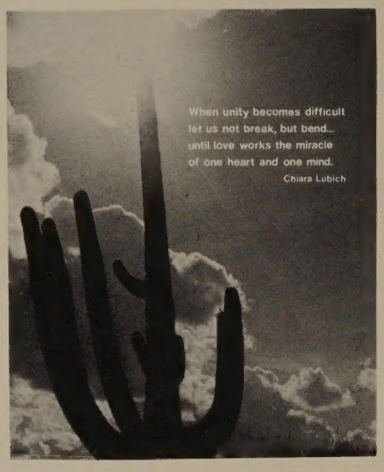
TORONTO:
P.O. Box 302 - Stn. T
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M6B 4A3

Focolare posters

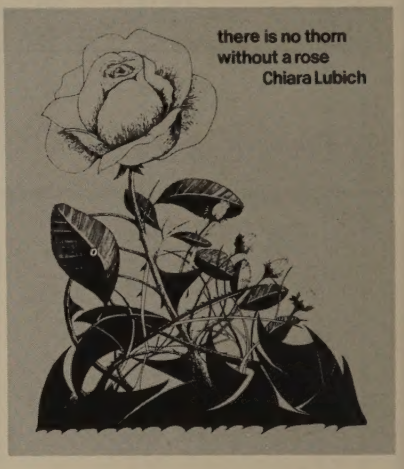
A new color poster (15" x 18") is now available at all the Focolare Centers. The other four posters (also 15" x 18") can still be obtained as well. All can be ordered by mail from:
Focolare Movement, P.O. Box 496,
New York, N.Y. 10021



FMPcl4


When unity becomes difficult
let us not break, but bend...
until love works the miracle
of one heart and one mind.
Chiara Lubich

FMPcl2



FMPbw4

FMPcl3

FMPbw3

Price: $2.00/color — $1.50/black and white

If ordered by mail please add handling and shipping charges and specify if you wish to receive them first or third class.

Shipping and handling charges:

FIRST CLASS: **Delivery time: approximately 1 week**

1 poster 1.40, 2 posters 1.55, 3 posters 1.70, 4 posters 1.80. For more than 4 posters, postal rates depend on weight and zone.

THIRD CLASS: **Delivery time: approximately 2 weeks**

1 to 2 posters 1.00, 3 to 4 posters 1.15, 5 to 6 posters 1.30, 7 posters 1.40. For more than 7 posters, postal rates depend on weight and zone.

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

The Focolare Movement began in 1943, in Italy. Chiara Lubich, with a small group of girls, realized in the midst of the total destruction of World War II, that God is the only one worth living for. Hence they began to place the Gospel in the center of their lives. The testament of Jesus became their Ideal: "That all may be one . . . that the world may know that you have sent me, and that you have loved them as you have loved me . . . " (Jn.17: 23). The life lived by these first girls, the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to a form of spirituality proper to the Focolare Movement. It represents a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

The name "Focolarini" takes its origin from the Italian word "fire" and suggests the idea of "carriers of fire."

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They work as other lay men and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini."

THE VOLUNTEERS

The Volunteers, who are also called the "Volunteers of God," would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. For this reason they remain in their jobs and in their professions in order to vivify them with this spirit.

Their aim is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

THE LARGEST MEMBERSHIP

The largest membership of the Movement is made up of men, women, and young people of all social conditions who are free of any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their free and willing acceptance of its spirit. They keep in touch with the Movement and with one another through large or small gatherings, publications, correspondence, and personal contact.

People with other commitments, even those bound to religious institutions, can form part of the Movement too because the Movement exists wherever its spirit is lived. People of non-Christian religions are also counted among the Movement's friends. Also those who owe no allegiance to any faith are often attracted by one or another of the Movement's aspects.

GEN

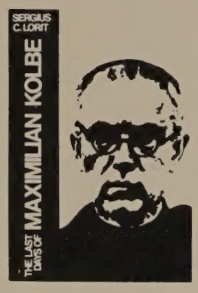
The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation.

Thousands of young people all over the world have been attracted by the spirituality of unity. Their number continues to grow.

At the core of this large group of youth, are Gen who have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love. The Gen use all possible means to share with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

NCP christian living

new



Sergius C. Lorit
THE LAST DAYS OF MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

On June 7, 1979, John Paul II visiting Maximilian Kolbe's death cell said: "It was impossible for me not to come here as Pope. I have come to this special shrine, the birthplace, I can say, of the patron of our difficult century . . . to pray . . ."
In a series of flashbacks that originate in a prison quadrangle at Auschwitz and in starvation bunker No. 13. S. Lorit traces back the life of Maximilian Kolbe. His last days and his death were a victory of love over hatred and the atrocities generated by World War II.

Paper $2.95

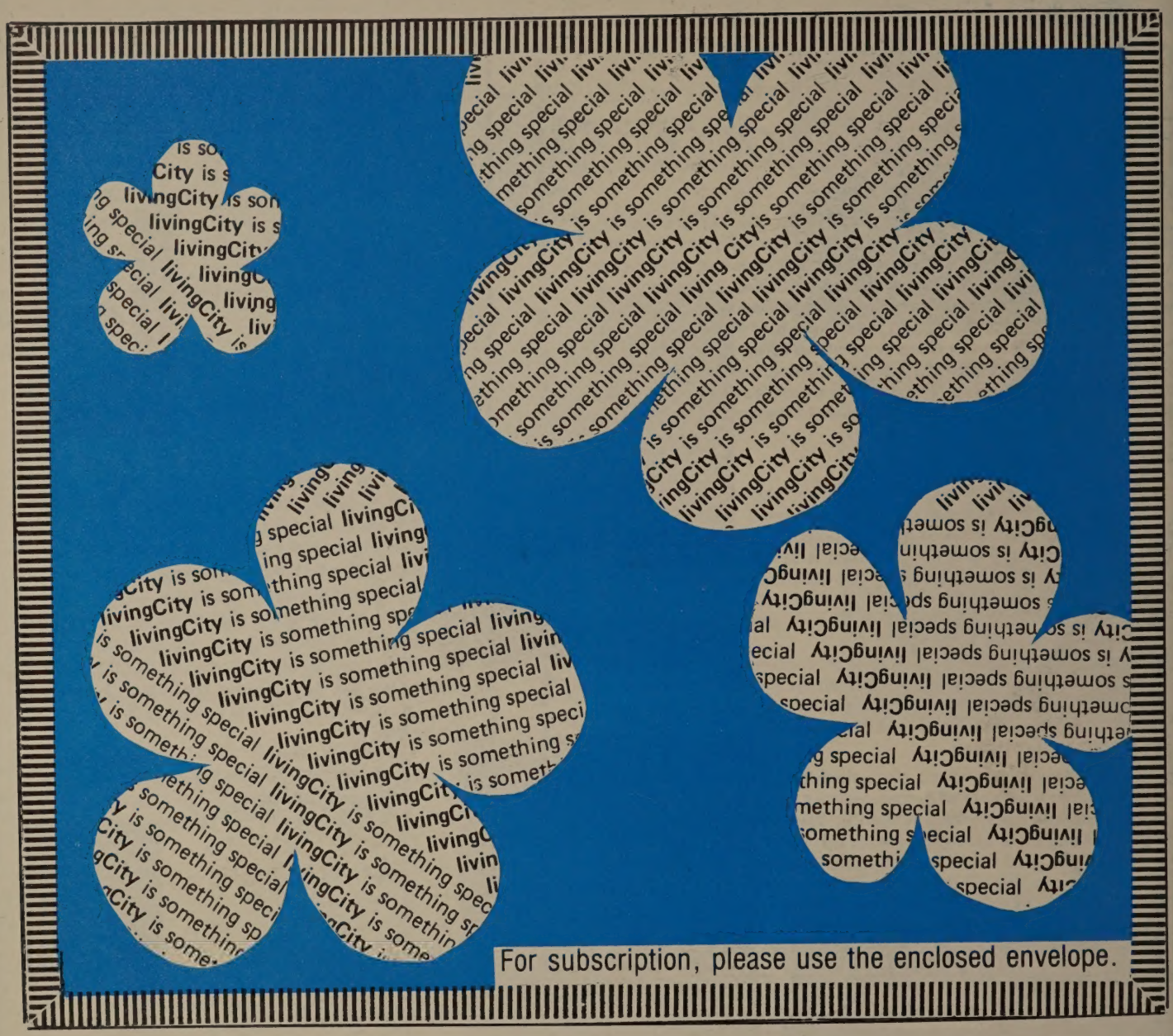
Sergius C. Lorit
CHARLES DE FOUCAULD: THE SILENT WITNESS

The exciting story of the former Viscount Charles de Foucauld, French dilettante playboy, courageous cavalry officer, and adventurous Moroccan explorer, who eventually became the most beloved "holy man" of the Sahara desert. He spent the last fifteen years of his life working among the poorest Moslem tribes of Northern Africa, until he was tragically murdered by a band of renegade thieves. His life and thought gave birth to one of the most vigorous currents of spirituality in today's Church.

Paper $2.50

NCP
NEW CITY PRESS

206 Skillman Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11211
Tel. (212) 387-3454



LIVING CITY
P.O. Box 126
JAMAICA, NEW YORK 11415

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 420
Long Island City, N.

Grad Theological Union 21-2
Library Serials Dept.
2400 Ridge Rd.
Berkley, CA 94709

PRINTED IN U.S.A.